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Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I just wanted to let people know that we have an exemption to the health order restricting gatherings such as this and we are practising social distancing while we're proceeding with this session of the House. So I just wanted to table the exemption to the order, if I could.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I give notice and, by leave and seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, move the following motion.

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order of this House, Routine Proceedings of the House of Assembly, with the exemption of Question Period, are suspended for this sitting day; that the Orders of the Day provided for in this motion shall be dealt with in the manner provided by it; that Notice of Motion is deemed to have been given on the following bills: An Act to Amend the Liquor Control Act and the Liquor Corporation Act, Bill 34; An Act Respecting the Witnessing of Documents Through the Use of Audio-Visual Technology, Bill 35; An Act to Amend the Temporary Variation of Statutory Deadlines Act, Bill 36; An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act, 2012, Bill 37; and An Act to Amend the Public Health Protection and Promotion Act, Bill 38; and that those said bills shall now be deemed to have been read for a first time; and that the notice shall be deemed to have been given under Standing Order 11(1) that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Tuesday, May 5, 2020, and I so move this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

MR. SPEAKER: As pursuant the motion we just passed, we're going to move to Question Period now.

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to get on my feet and participate in the proceedings of the House in these circumstances. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, this morning, CBC carried a story about stockpiles of personal protective equipment for an H1N1 pandemic that didn't happen and government's failure to renew them for a pandemic, the present one, that has happened.

Does the Minister of Health dispute the statement of the president of the nurses' union that the government did not plan or prepare for the need for a strategic reserve of PPE?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Again, just to echo my colleague's comments about how nice it is to actually be in a room with people; albeit, physically distant.

It's a very good question. There were stockpiles, common with other provinces and the feds, which were put in place in 2009. Over a period of time they were not renewed. They were either disposed of or used in some way within the health care system, and these decisions were taken prior to 2015.

The warehouse in which they were stored was vacated in 2016 as surplus space when we reorganized the Special Assistance Program. PPE has been a challenge. We propose to introduce a mechanism now where adequate,

appropriate inventory control will prevent this from happening again.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the answer begs the fact that the program the minister refers to was brought in in July 2017 and he's had three years to implement it.

Does the minister agree that in failing to comply with the official pandemic plan and keep a strategic reserve of PPE available, the government was caught with its pants down?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This pandemic has certainly been a learning exercise for a lot of us. We were informed that there were materials in stockpiles across the province. That, apparently, turned out to be inaccurate and we have found ourselves in a situation where we have some expired stock. We have repurposed that for FIT testing. As the Member opposite is aware, we are now in a position where our PPE supplies and deliveries match our current burn rate.

On a go-forward basis, we will reaccumulate that stockpile so that we have a surge capacity consistent with likely demand but also to avoid wastage – such as this has happened – in the future.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I the minister's answer to be that he, in part, was misled as to

either the existence or the extent of the existence of the stockpile.

We turn to another topic. Yesterday, we learned in the media of the need to isolate 85 health care workers after contact with a patient who tested positive for COVID-19.

After all the sacrifices made by residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, how could the largest hospital in our province violate the isolation rules designed to prevent this kind of thing from happening?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously, an area of concern for all of us. Without going into too much detail because of clinical privacy, the patient concerned had been tested negative on two successive occasions, 48-hours apart, prior to being transferred to that unit. When their condition deteriorated and they were then sent back to the intensive care unit, one out of two tests showed positive. Since then, they have tested negative on two successive occasions.

The staff were isolated out of an abundance of precaution. Of the, actually, 93 individuals involved, all have been tested; 90 of those have proven negative, three are outstanding, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, what does the minister's answer to the question imply about the validity and accuracy of our testing for COVID-19?

Originally, we validated the test, over 50 cases, with a central laboratory in Canada, but my question is: What quality assurance measures have been followed since to ensure that our testing for COVID-19 remains valid? And, indeed, what doubts about this has the

information the minister just given us cause him to have?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Our tests are validated internally. And with reference to the national microbiological lab in Winnipeg, all of our positive samples are sent out there anyway.

What it does raise is the fact that this is a dynamic situation with a virus that is novel and unknown. Infectious diseases doctors across the country are discussing this, and there is, apparently, now a pick-up rate positive where the virus particles exist but are dead and inactive. This is causing some challenges for our health care workers in interpreting some of these results. Once again, this has to be a clinical decision more about the patient than any one particular test.

The key message here is if you are tested for COVID-19, stay home for 14 days whether the result is positive or negative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: I thank the minister for his answer.

Could he explain to the House when officials in his department were advised of the incident involving the 85 health care workers, please?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much for the question.

Certainly, I can't give a precise time. I can certainly find that out for him and report back to the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm naturally interested in knowing whether it was before or after the meeting of the pandemic committee on that morning.

Mr. Speaker, the pandemic is a global health issue and we're facing also an economic crisis. Many businesses in this province fear they won't survive. While the federal rent-relief program was welcomed, it will not help businesses who simply cannot afford the 25 per cent portion of the rent because they have no revenue.

What is the province going to do to help these businesses find the rent?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, as you know – and I agree, there are a number of businesses within Newfoundland and Labrador that are struggling right now. We are aware of this. It's one of the reasons why we're going out meeting with those local businesses right now to see where the provincial government could actually support them.

We know that the federal programs right now, with a degree of certainty, they do have a timeline attached to them around mid-June of this year and some of those could potentially be extended. We've realized that some businesses, really without revenue, cannot pay any of the rent at all, Mr. Speaker.

We're taking this into consideration, given the financial situation of the province. Whatever we can do to support our business community, we will be doing it, just like we will the rest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I will take this opportunity to actually answer the question that was previously asked. This information that the minister responded to a few minutes ago about health care workers at Eastern

Health, that was not known at the time of our meeting yesterday.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Premier, for that answer.

We are hearing from businesses that relief programs that involve deferrals of fees, loan payments and the like don't help because the revenue is not deferred, rather it's lost for good.

Will the government consider ways to free up cash immediately through relief in areas like workers' compensation premiums or other utilities fees?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, after spending many, many years in business, I understand the cash flow issues that many businesses could have to deal with, given this situation that we currently find ourselves in.

Yes, we are looking at all the options that we have available to us, not just on a deferral basis, but very tangible ways that we can actually support those businesses that are struggling right now as an impact of this COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Speaker. When we get to find the ways that are best, we could have the most meaningful impact, those are the kind of measures that we will put in place to support our business community.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: As the Premier and his government well know, business and industry are the backbone of the economy and if they're not helped to get through the crisis, our economy will not recover. This will result in mass unemployment and people leaving the province in droves. Business and industry have told the government what is needed.

Rather than hire individuals with ties to the government, why doesn't the government just listen to business and industry and take action?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, we are taking action. This is the reason why we go out and consult with those industry leaders and the business community. Let's not forget, we have some non-government organizations out there, too, that are great job creators. We understand that it is the small business community, Mr. Speaker, in our province that is the backbone, and they will create jobs.

We've been literally less than two months into this situation right now. The magnitude of the impact, the industries that will be impacted the most. Mr. Speaker, we want to put the money where the money can work, and that is exactly the process that we're doing right now. It's important that we put key business leaders together, facilitate that information. Sometimes it could be money that's required; sometimes it could be changing regulations that could actually support businesses to be able to expand.

There's one thing for sure, Mr. Speaker, going through this health crisis, what will be equally important when we come out of this, come safely through the health crisis, but then come out of this to support the business community and others, the employers in our province that will create the jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With the travel restrictions, the tourism and hospitality sector in our province will be devastated this year. A made-at-home solution is needed to help businesses that work in our tourism and hospitality sector survive. The federal government programs are scheduled to end in June.

Is this government considering a relief package to help businesses that operate in the tourism and hospitality sectors?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: We sure are, Mr. Speaker. I know, speaking to the Minister of TCII just this morning on this very issue – we communicate quite regularly – realizing that the tourism industry, which is a huge job generator in rural Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker, and throughout our province.

Mr. Speaker, we have a great tourism package right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. So we want to make sure that – this year will be negatively impacted, we all know that with the recent travel bans, but coming through this year we want to support our tourism industry so that next year, hopefully, people will be comfortable coming back to what is one of the safest places in this world to visit.

Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, is a great place to visit. Probably not so much this year, but next year we want to position this province to be a place where visitors will come and will travel here safely.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to hear the Premier reassure the tourism operators that they will be helped.

Camping is a part of our culture in this province, Mr. Speaker. We get a very short window to enjoy the outdoors. We understand the concerns of public health, but we are hearing from those people who operate campgrounds that accommodations can be made to ensure social distancing, that campers can enjoy the parks safely.

Will government consider opening campgrounds earlier than originally planned, because this is also an economic driver in our province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: It sure is, Mr. Speaker, and I think most people in this House of Assembly would agree that camping is a good experience. It is a healthy experience. It is great for families, but, Mr. Speaker, we all know that given the current pandemic that we're dealing with, and given the cluster – and the Leader of the Opposition just mentioned some of the challenges that we had at Eastern Health, and it's been dealt with. We also know what happened with the funeral home in our province, so we need to be cautious.

We will make decisions through the advice of the chief medical officer and she will make her decisions and put measures in place, based on the evidence that we have within our health system. It's important that we listen to the science. I think everyone would agree to that. It's important that we take the advice, do this cautiously so we can protect our families.

When it comes to a point where those alerts, I think it's Alert 2, can be changed that will provide for overnight camping, Mr. Speaker, it will be all of us working together to make sure that we can get there. It just requires a little patience right now.

Camping is a great experience, but let's be very patient in how we introduce and relax those new measures based on the advice that comes from the chief medical officer.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Premier for that response, but not all campers and campsites are created equal. There are campgrounds with a lot of space to allow for social distancing. There are campgrounds that can keep their gathering areas, public facilities closed. There are campgrounds that can be

restricted to trailers only with their own facilities.

Will government explore options for some form of restricted camping season that will allow campers to enjoy their home away from home? It's not only good for families, Mr. Speaker, but it's also good for people's mental health?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: It sure is good for people's mental health, Mr. Speaker. I think the decision, when you listen to the advice that been coming from our chief medical officer, is that you do this and you do it with caution. So when the chief medical officer is to a point in the decision-making process, she is comfortable giving the indicators within our province – and the Leader of the Opposition just made note of things about relaxing measures.

What is required, Mr. Speaker? An adequate supply of PPE in our province, making sure that our borders are tight so that travellers coming into our province are not reintroducing this COVID-19 virus in Newfoundland and Labrador, but also making sure that our acute care hospitals have the capacity within the system in case we get an outbreak, Mr. Speaker, that we can actually respond to that. One additional thing would be we would use an app on our cellphone or smart phones that would actually be able to trace people just in case we have another outbreak.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on April 2 the Minister of Education said: "No one student will be disadvantaged here because of connectivity." It's now become almost two full months since school has closed.

How many students have been left behind because of lack of connectivity in home learning resources such as laptops or iPads?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, the public school system here in Newfoundland and Labrador is based on equity and is fundamental to our education system, one we are all working to achieve in this extraordinary time. Teachers are expected to be checking in on their students regularly. We've had the opportunities to reach out to some of the teachers. I've seen it myself, where teachers have connected with their students.

With regard to the Member's statement on connectivity, Mr. Speaker, I've been speaking with the district just as of lately. We've put out hundreds of devices and we will continue to monitor that and continue to invest in other devices. Just within the next few coming days, we expect a resource package to go out to all students as well.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, it's a big issue because a lot of parents are asking about it and rightfully so. Education of our children is paramount.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development again. It's been almost two months since the Newfoundland English School District cancelled all school-sponsored trips; however, our office has heard from many of the hundreds of parents who are still owed refunds in the thousands of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, parents are frustrated with being led from department to the school, to the travel agent, to the insurance provider, to the underwriter.

Minister, my question is: When are you going to step up and help the families recover the money they are owed?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. WARR: Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for the question. It's a question that was raised with me by a Member of his own caucus just a short while ago.

I did, Mr. Speaker, have the discussions with my department, who in turn had discussions with NLESD, as early as today. I can say that for most instances that I've been given the information on, there have been travel credits issued to parents.

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member wants to bring a particular incident up with regard to someone not getting compensated for the loss, I'd be happy to address that.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The fishing season is getting underway in this province and there's a lot of uncertainty for plant workers, harvesters and processors.

What is the government doing to ensure that the fishing season will be both safe and viable this year?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: The fishery is extremely important in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, it's a big part of our history; it's a big job creator, big employer.

Mr. Speaker, the measures that have been taken around plant workers, obviously, as they put their floor plans in place so that people – if you work in a fish processing plant – can do so safely, and people who do not want to go to

work in that environment are encouraged not to do so. So, it's only for people that would be comfortable and feel that their safety is the priority and can go to work safely; then, if they see fit to go there, they could.

Likewise, with the fishing harvesting sector, it's no different, Mr. Speaker. People are expected, if they want to go to work, they go to work in a safe environment. If at the appropriate time measures need to be taken as a province to support those industries, we will do whatever we can, but, Mr. Speaker, I think there are a lot of people right now that are eager to go out, either through the harvesting sector or processing, but only when it's safe.

MR. SPEAKER: The Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've heard that there are over 50 more out-of-province workers who are working alongside Newfoundlanders and Labradorians at the Corner Brook hospital, long-term care facilities in Grand Falls and in Gander, who are coming from Ontario and Quebec.

We ask the question: Who has deemed these essential, Mr. Speaker, and why could the work not be done by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question.

Over the last number of days, we've certainly reached out to our contractors in this province. I've talked to Trades NL. I've talked to the Heavy Civil Association as recently as this morning. I meet on a weekly basis with the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association as well.

Mr. Speaker, we agree with the Member opposite. If people are doing jobs in this

province in the construction industry – right now, under TW-led projects, there are some 24 people in this province from out of province working, and if contractors – and we’ve spoken to these companies – can’t find a way to find Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to do this work, Mr. Speaker, we will certainly work with the Department of Health and the public health officers to – if there are loopholes here, we are certainly more than willing to close those up, Mr. Speaker.

To his point, it’s very important that if contractors can find people in this province to do that work, this work should be done by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. And if need be, Mr. Speaker, we will take further measures to ensure that.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We agree with the minister. The issue has been who has determined these are essential workers that are necessary here and why they couldn’t be filled by those trades people we have in Newfoundland and Labrador. That’s the question we do expect to be answered in the near future.

The federal government has pledged a mere \$75 million for oil industry in this province, money that is earmarked to reduce emissions in the industry. I suggest to the minister that this money will do little to help our industry get back up and running and get Newfoundlanders and Labradorians back to work. Our oil industry needs more support.

I ask the minister: What specifically have you asked the federal minister to provide in terms of tangible support to the offshore industry?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As this is the first time I had the opportunity to be on my feet, I want to thank the essential workers in our province and I want to thank all of us for being here today.

Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite asked a very important question. We’ve been talking to the federal government with CAPP and with Noia to ensure that we have supports for our offshore.

Mr. Speaker, the oil and gas industry offshore, we’ve asked specifically for supports around preserving financial equity and, very importantly, for investments to ensure that we have a very robust involvement in exploration. We have been speaking almost daily with the federal government on these very issues, he is correct. The federal government has invested, I think, \$1.7 billion on orphaned and abandoned mines in Alberta and in Saskatchewan, and allocated \$75 million to ensure that we can reduce our levels of emissions in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Exploration is a key step to oil production.

I ask the minister: Will she work with the federal counterparts to extend all current licences so that exploration and discoveries can be pursued?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: The key here, Mr. Speaker, is exploration. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador under former governments, under this government, we’ve made massive investments to understand what the opportunity is offshore and we know the prospectivity is enormous. We know there are some 52 billion barrels of oil yet to be discovered; we’ve seen that on seismic, Mr. Speaker.

The answer to his question is absolutely. We have indicated to the operators that we’re willing to work with them on a one-to-one basis to see

how we can support them in continuing their exploration program, but very importantly we're speaking to the federal government about investments to ensure exploration continues. Because exploration is key, Mr. Speaker. There could be 52 other Hibernias off our coast.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear that the Pharmacy Board will be easing away the 30-day medication supply over the next two weeks. I've raised the matter on additional occasions with the minister himself.

I ask the minister now: What will he put in play to reimburse those who've had to pay the extra dispensing fee?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This was a decision of the Pharmacy Board which has had significant impact on seniors particularly and those with chronic health conditions. From our point of view, we were the first of the Atlantic governments to recognize this for NLPDP clients, those people for whom we have a responsibility to cover their medications. We allocated initially, I think, \$3.5 million to cover up to six months of such expense.

We have negotiated long and hard with the Pharmacy Board who have the sole jurisdiction over this. We have managed to get them now to a place where these restrictions on prescription dispensing will be gone within two weeks.

What we can do, as far as those people who are self-pay or for those people who are privately insured is a different matter. We will look to see

what precedents have been set in other jurisdictions.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: We were recently made aware of a no-bid contract awarded to Mr. Paul Mills – a member of the Premier's transition team into office – at \$150,000 annually. In 2017, this government also awarded a contract to Mr. Mills to help develop *The Way Forward* at a rate of \$1,500 a day for a total of almost \$200,000 over a six-month period.

Was this contract also a no bid and was he paid the amount described?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: First of all, Mr. Speaker, as I clarified last week, there are two Paul Mills; one that worked on the election campaign last year. There are two different people here but, indeed, the one in question today is the one that did work on the transition team. At the time, this was not a paid position, but he did at the time simply because of the experience over 30 years that he had working with the federal government.

What we were looking for there is to find out around the bureaucracy of the federal government and how that would interconnect with the provincial government, Mr. Speaker. It was part of gathering the information on a transition into government in 2015, working and leaning on the experience.

There's no question, if you look at the résumé of Mr. Mills, it's a short-term contract right now to help us to support the business community, as the Leader of the Opposition just clearly pointed out, was necessary at this point in time. So leaning on and learning from the over 30 years' experience, given the experience with the federal government, Mr. Speaker. It's a short-term contract and it's putting us in the position to

support our business community in a few months.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Mr. Speaker, on February 10 the Premier and the MP for St. John's South said they would implement a rate mitigation plan, including a cost-of-service agreement.

I ask the Premier: When will we see this plan to protect people from the high cost of Muskrat Falls power?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What was outlined at that point was the process that we would follow through and take rates back to 13.5 cents. Mr. Speaker, I think we must keep in mind too, that around this time last year we were the only party that put in place what was a credible rate mitigation plan for people in the province. That is one that we took to the campaign with.

Mr. Speaker, we worked throughout last year, we put the process, we identified what the process would be at the announcement, Mr. Speaker. Work is continuing with the officials, even through this pandemic.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: What measures will he take to control the expected influx of workers to Labrador this summer who could potentially spread COVID-19 to the local communities?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I will take my advice from the chief medical officer who has the power delegated to her under the act and Special Measures Order. Our principles have essentially been that only those people from outside of the province who provide skills that are essential to critical infrastructure are really the individuals we would want to see. We've already seen changes in the way some work is being done on projects up there to bring in local workers to avoid out-of-province travel.

Our main risk, once we have flattened this curve – and touch wood, it seems to be flat at the moment – is that we will import the virus again once more from outside, and that is the substance of our focus at the moment from public health and Special Measures Order perspective.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: Can he tell us if and how he will act on the proposal by the Third Party to establish a collaborative, non-partisan Select Committee on economic recovery?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Certainly, very interested in that, Mr. Speaker. I think from my estimation and how I feel about the all-party Committee on public health as we deal with this – we've been meeting every day – we've had some conversations, some good decisions that's been based on that, and gave us an opportunity, I think, as all parties.

Mr. Speaker, I think we could learn lessons from that. I also believe that we could take that kind of group into a discussion on the recovery of our economy. I'm open to that. As you know, I've met with your party leaders about four weeks ago, yesterday, and we're still waiting on concept and indeed if there's willingness from all parties to participate at that level.

Mr. Speaker, as Premier of the province, I think it's a good idea and I'd be more than willing.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've heard the CEO of the NLESD raise the possibility of a shift system for schools in September. The opening of schools will require a comprehensive plan to address the logistics of a shift system, online instruction, busing, supervision, school cleaning, curriculum nights, courses such as physical education and the learning deficits caused by the closing of schools in March.

I ask the minister: Will he confirm whether or not such planning is under way and whether we can expect to see such a plan by June of this year, well in advance of the school year?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for the question. Certainly, the hon. Member raises some good points, Mr. Speaker, and again, this is a moving target. We've been in consultation with the district. Actually, the district has been very forthright in their plans to date, Mr. Speaker. Again, we take our direction from the chief medical officer for health. As we move forward and if we see an opening where we think the schools are to open in September, we will make sure that the provisions are made for students to get back to school safe and that our learning continues, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

The hon. Member for Humber - Bay of Islands, I understand that he has requested leave of the House to extend Question Period by three minutes to ask some questions.

Is it the will of the House to give him consent to do so?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Seeing no objections, the Member has leave.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My office and the office of the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands has received many calls regarding workers from outside the province working on the Core Science building in St. John's and long-term care facilities in Gander and Grand Falls. These workers were deemed essential workers for these infrastructure projects.

We have many qualified Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that can do this work. With all the sacrifices that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have made, people are asking why are surgeries being postponed, diagnostic testing postponed and cataract surgeries postponed, but these workers are being allowed in.

How can you justify allowing workers from Quebec and other provinces where there is still a high rate of COVID-19 infections to come to our province, to work side by side, not self-isolate and possibly bring this home to the workers and their families in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Can the minister explain to us who developed these guidelines and how these workers were put on an essential list, while medical procedures are being cancelled?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question.

I just want to go back to the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island's question earlier about who actually puts these guidelines in place. These guidelines are guidelines of the chief medical health officer in the province.

These guidelines were set out early on in the pandemic.

What's come to light over the last few days – and we've had these discussions – I know I've had it with the Premier and the Minister of Health and others – around the fact that if we have contractors out there that are finding ways to bring people in here, that was never the intent of these guidelines. Because it was never the intent of these guidelines to allow people into this province who have skills that are available in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you we're reviewing that and we expect our contractors, in this province, to do their part in this pandemic. If they don't want to listen to what guidelines are in place or if they want to try and find loopholes in this, we'll certainly go beyond to plug those loopholes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, it is going on as we speak, so there's no question about it that it should be taken care of immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the seriousness of this pandemic. Our office has been contacted on many occasions by citizens who are waiting for medical treatment. Private clinics can only do emergency cases.

I have one person who battled cancer, he has a major eye problem, but is not deemed essential or deemed as emergency. Just another, he's waiting to get a CAT scan. He's in constant pain. He can't even stand, but it's not deemed essential. Yet, we're allowing workers from other provinces to work side by side by our local workers without self-isolation.

I ask the minister: On behalf of the residents who are in constant pain, can we look at some way that we can relax the issues for surgeries for people in the Province of Newfoundland and

Labrador? It's so serious that people are in constant pain.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an excellent question.

The issue of clinical priority is left to the clinicians. Who is urgent or emergent is a decision only for a clinical practice. We have left that in their hands, and my information is that these have been proceeding. We are still operating on cancers and urgencies. Diagnostic tests that are required for assessment of urgent or emergent patients continue.

The question relating to specific cases is a matter, by and large, for discussion between the referring practitioner and the specialist. They are the ones who determine what is urgent and what is not. As the measures relax over the course of the next two alert levels, we'll see an opening up of the health care system in a way that's responsible, given the requirements of surge capacity of the pandemic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Before I recognize the Government House Leader, I just want to advise Members and the viewing public that we're having some technical difficulties with our satellite feed. Because of this, some television viewers are not receiving closed-captioning. Closed-captioning is available on the web streaming, if viewers wish to view it that way.

Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call second reading of Bill 35.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 35, An Act Respecting The Witnessing Of Documents Through The Use Of Audio-Visual Technology, be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 35, An Act Respecting The Witnessing Of Documents Through The Use Of Audio-Visual Technology, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act Respecting The Witnessing Of Documents Through The Use Of Audio-Visual Technology.” (Bill 35)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and certainly a pleasure to stand and speak to this bill today.

The proposed bill would temporarily allow for the remote witnessing of the following documents: wills pursuant to section 2 of the *Wills Act*; affidavits, declarations, affirmations or certificates pursuant to the *Commissioner for Oaths Act*; an affidavit, declaration, affirmation or documents pursuant to the *Notaries Public Act*; and an instrument pursuant to section 15 of the *Registration of Deeds Act, 2009*.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, the legislation in this province requires in-person witnessing for most documents used as evidence before the courts, such as affidavits; instruments filed at the registry of deeds, such as deeds and wills.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of COVID-19 and the challenges associated with the physical-distancing guidelines, the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador approached JPS officials to discuss a temporary solution to allow lawyers in the province the ability to remotely witness certain documents using audiovisual technology. JPS officials determined that without legislative amendments, there is no

ability to allow for remote witnessing of documents within the province.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of COVID-19, JPS is aware that most provinces, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, have also introduced a temporary mechanism to allow for remote, virtual commissioning, either by court or law society directive, an order-in-council, ministerial order or through regulation. JPS has canvassed all of these avenues and determined, Mr. Speaker, that none are available as an option for this province, except for a legislative amendment.

The proposed bill to allow for the remote witnessing of document using audiovisual technology would be available in the following circumstances: during the COVID-19 public health emergency only; the bill will expire when the public health emergency under the *Public Health Protection and Promotion Act* is over; by a lawyer in good standing with the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador; lawyers are self-regulated, Mr. Speaker, and they’re subject to discipline and carry public liability insurance. They maintain public confidence in unprecedented times. This limitation is consistent with other temporary measures adopted in other provinces and territories, that the lawyer take responsible steps to verify the identity of the person or persons signing the documents, and the lawyer must comply with all other requirements made by the Law Society.

Mr. Speaker, JPS has consulted with the Law Society and they will be issuing a Law Society rule and form on remote witnessing, similar to directives issued by law societies in other provinces and territories, and mitigated risk to ensure client identification capacity is addressed and there is no duress.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to having the support of the House on this particular bill, and I will take my seat.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak to that as a member of the Law Society myself, although non-practicing. This is also being reviewed by our Justice critic and supported by the legal community at large, to my understanding.

It's a sensible measure which is self-limiting, and which will expire upon the expiry or withdrawal of the state of emergency proclaimed by the Minister of Health. I am as well greatly cheered to hear the minister say that lawyers maintain public confidence in unprecedented times. I hope the same may be said of politicians.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the circumstances calling for this kind of intervention, or this kind of temporary amendment to the legislation, are not hard to understand. Not everything received in modern practice of the law from ancient times deserves to be preserved and continued, but the witnessing of documents like wills and other solemn documents intended for registration in the Registry of Deeds is one of those customs which has its roots deeply into the evolution of common and statute law both in the United Kingdom and in Canada, and in the legal history of Newfoundland and Labrador.

What the government has sought to do here is preserve that guarantee on the veracity and solemnity of documents, such as wills and other solemn documents, by way of that guarantee of authenticity and intention, which is represented by witnessing of the document.

On that basis, the PC Opposition is pleased to be able to support the intervention, including the intent that it should expire simultaneously with another act, which would be the withdrawal or the expiry of the state of emergency. Therefore, this is a bill that we think should be supported and do support.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We, too, will support this document. From the technical briefing, certainly there seems to be an adequate number of safeguards in place, not the least of which that there is an expiration on this; however, noting that there's often a lot of discussion about the education system entering into the 21st century when it comes to technology and e-learning and so on and so forth, in some ways maybe this is something to look at after this pandemic and state of emergency is over.

I'm always amazed at just how many other professions have not really entered into the 21st century and the onus is on education. It's something to consider towards maybe looking at this as a permanent measure if it has some validity here. It would certainly, in a province of our geographical size, make life considerably easier.

Again, it has a number of safeguards with regard to the witnessing of the document and methods of verifying the identity of the person signing the document. With that in mind, we have here, I think, plenty of safeguards that will do a few things: make sure that it's valid and make sure that the process of a will is signed in due course, and do it so that nothing untoward may happen to that person so that you have those legal measures in place.

A will, to me, is about a piece of mind, an act of security. So anything that would delay it could also cause greater ramifications but, certainly, when you look at this, it's a good piece of legislation. The only thing we would say is at a later date maybe it's worth considering making this part of a permanent structure so that remote witnessing, depending on the circumstances, is allowed. I think that's something that could be adopted for future legislation.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to stand for a minute and support this bill also. Myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, with the briefing are satisfied that this is done a lot right now across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, all across Canada – with the Law Society ensuring the safeguards that are in place; there's a sunset clause for this.

We know, Mr. Speaker, the pandemic in Newfoundland and Labrador. Before I go any further, I just have to recognize the work that the government is doing – Dr. Haggie, Dr. Fitzgerald, and all that, and the Premier, doing on this also. I have to recognize that and understand that, yes, there are always going to be issues and there are going to be some raised here today; but, generally speaking, we may have discussions about what we can do in the future a bit quicker, some of the things about campsites, maybe surgeries, as I just mentioned.

But overall, starting with the pandemic, I have to pass on a lot of the comments that I heard from people. I know the Minister of Health is here in this House, and I just have to say great job with it. You have the confidence of the people in the province and now we may add on to some ideas from the general public. I have to pass on to the minister, when you include the all-party Committee on health care, there are two independents here, two people probably with the most experience, except for probably one Member, the Minister of Finance, who's been in government the longest here. So excluding two Members – now, that's just something for the future, because our residents have a lot of concerns also on it. But I have to recognize that from the Minister of Health and Dr. Fitzgerald.

We will be supporting this. I will be supporting this on behalf of my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. As I said, the pandemic is going ahead as we speak, and hopefully we're going to do better every day, every day we'll get better, but there are things that need to be done. There are people that need their wills just for peace of mind. There are people that need other documents signed, Mr. Speaker. So this is just the way of the future. Maybe we can use it in other avenues to save a

lot of time, save a lot of funds for people within the Law Society. This may be brought in as legislation later.

I will be supporting this on behalf of the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. We think it's a great idea brought up by the Law Society to Justice. The minister who brought it forth, this will help relieve a lot of anxiety for a lot of people who need a lot of legal work done. It may be small to us, but the person who had the anxiety over it, it's big.

So we look forward to it and support this.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development speaks now, he'll close the debate.

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly want to recognize and thank the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, who is a lawyer himself and understands the bill and certainly the process that we're going through; and, as well, my hon. colleague, the Member for St. John's Centre, and the Member for Humber-Bay of Islands. I appreciate the support and look forward to the bill going through Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 35 be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act Respecting The Witnessing Of Documents Through The Use Of Audio-Visual Technology. (Bill 35)

MR. SPEAKER: The bill has now been read a second time.

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House?

AN HON. MEMBER: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, “An Act Respecting The Witnessing Of Documents Through The Use Of Audio-Visual Technology,” read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole presently, by leave. (Bill 35)

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I should now leave the Chair and the matter be referred to a Committee of the Whole.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, the Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Bennett): Order, please!

We’re now considering Bill 35, An Act Respecting the Witnessing of Documents Through the Use of Audio-Visual Technology.

A bill, “An Act Respecting The Witnessing Of Documents Through The Use Of Audio-Visual Technology.” (Bill 35)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 7 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 7 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 7 carried.

CLERK: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows.

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act Respecting The Witnessing Of Documents Through The Use Of Audio-Visual Technology.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, long title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 35 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: I move, Mr. Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 35.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 35.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate, Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 35 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee has considered the matters to them referred and

directed him to report that Bill 35 has been carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call third reading of Bill 35.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the minister have leave to do third reading of Bill 35?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Leave.

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, that Bill 35 be now read a third time

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that this bill be now read a third time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting The Witnessing Of Documents Through The Use Of Audio-Visual Technology. (Bill 35)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and that its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting The Witnessing Of Documents Through The Use Of

Audio-Visual Technology,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 35)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I give notice and by leave, and seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, move the following motion: That while the COVID-19 pandemic and required public health orders continue, the House of Assembly Members need to fulfil their parliamentary duties as legislators and to provide for accountability and transparency.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That, notwithstanding any Standing Order of this House, the House may wish to sit from time to time in virtual proceedings in a manner to be determined further to this resolution;

That, with respect to a sitting of this House, “virtual proceedings” may include a proceeding of this House with any combination of the following: (a) Members physically present in the Chamber; and (b) Members present remotely by other technological means, including by a video conferencing or audio only platform;

That a Select Committee of Rules and Procedures Governing Virtual Proceedings of this House of Assembly be established to determine the manner in which the House may conduct virtual proceedings, which proceedings must satisfy the following requirements: (a) a virtual proceeding must be a proceeding of parliament conducted under the authority of the Speaker in the manner agreed to by Members; (b) the manner of the proceeding must protect and uphold the parliamentary privilege enjoyed individually and collectively by this House and its Members; (c) all Members must be able to access and use any video conferencing or audio platform chosen by the Standing Orders Committee; (d) the platform chosen by the Committee must be secure for the purpose of a public meeting of this House; (e) the platform must be trusted by the Members and be transparent;

That the Select Committee consist of the current Members of the Standing Orders Committee, the Opposition House Leader, the Third Party House Leader and an unaffiliated Member as agreed to by the unaffiliated Members, or where there is no agreement, an unaffiliated Member to be chosen by the Speaker; that the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee shall be Chair of the Select Committee; that the Select Committee may, at the discretion of the Chair, meet using teleconference, virtual or other means to conduct its meetings; that the report of the Select Committee shall be tabled with the Clerk of the House of Assembly as soon as possible, but in any event no later than July 1, 2020, and shall be deemed to have been duly presented to and adopted by the House of Assembly on that date; that the measures recommended by the Select Committee and adopted by the House shall apply, as appropriate, to meetings of other Committees of the House and the Management Commission; and that the measures recommended by the Select Committee and adopted by this House by the passing of this motion shall remain in place until December 3, 2020, unless earlier revised or replaced by this House of Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that the motion as read by the minister should now pass.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This motion is something that we’ve been working on, I think, through the Government House Leader, the Opposition House Leader, the Opposition Leader and the Leader of the Third Party and the unaffiliated Members. I think that’s something we need to do at this time.

At this time, I’ll take my seat and allow for some debate on this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think that it's a great idea. As I look in the galleries, as we look at the number of Members that are here, you look in the galleries, the amount of space; it would be an option. Can we put more Members in the galleries so if anybody has to speak, we would all be here? Virtually it's great, too, but you can look at the size of the galleries that we have here and I'm sure with spacing, there's something we could look at also so that people could be here and if you need to speak because something affects your district, you can come down. There's plenty of self-distancing here in this House.

But if that can't be accommodated, what the minister brought forth is a great idea. At least you will be able to get your issues across and be able to support bills and bring up concerns that you may have.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister, when he said that one of the independents will sit on the Committee. I have no problem right now saying that the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands will be the person sitting on the Committee in St. John's, so he can attend the meetings. It will be less cost, if I was on the West Coast. So the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands will be the representative from the two independents.

I think that is the kind of co-operation that we need in this House. Like I said before, and I understand the pandemic that's happening. I understand there's an all-party committee, but there are two people here also with a lot of experience. I know when you talk about the finances in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, when you say we're possibly setting up an all-party committee, there are two people here who will also add a lot of experience to it. So you just can't take two independents and say, okay, you're elected but you have no input here.

I think the people that served with me in Cabinet for the two and a half years, that I have no problem bringing concrete solutions to the table and making tough decisions, making decisions after valuable contributions from the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'm also sure the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands has proven his capabilities in this House and his ability to take feedback and present it to the House of Assembly also.

This is a great step, because this time there may be two independents and the next it may be four or five. So it's time now, if you're going to include the House and have an all-party committee, you have to understand the structure of the House now and accept it as a reality, at least for this term. The next term things may change, who knows, but I'm just saying it's a great decision by the minister to include us. I'm looking forward, that if there is an all-party committee on finance to bring the province back to stability, I hope that we're included. I know we weren't included, and I know the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands asked to be on some of the sessions.

On this pandemic, I stood up and I said there are some guidelines that I think we have to look at, some restrictions that we have to look at, like the parks. I know the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island brought it up, which is a great idea because we hear it all around.

The temporary workers; we hear that the workers are coming in from outside, Mr. Speaker. That's the kind of issues that we're hearing. If we're hearing that and we can bring it to the table, we could come up with better solutions to help all the people. Because you have to realize, Mr. Speaker, even with these virtual sittings, is that the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands and myself, representing Humber - Bay of Islands - and I thank those people for that - that we have grave concerns also.

I brought up concerns today about health care. I brought up concerns, and I say to the Minister of Health - and I know, Mr. Speaker, I'm going off topic and I thank you for the leeway on this because it is a special sitting. I say to the Minister of Health, I understand what the Minister of Health is saying about when people are in dire straits. I understand what he is saying, it's between your physician and the specialist. I understand that, but restrictions that are in place,

I say to the minister, there are only a certain number that can be seen. You can always say that, yes, it's between your doctor and the medical specialist, but if we can find some way to bring workers in from Nova Scotia, from Quebec, we can definitely find a way that we can expand these services to some so we could bring them – some might not be as severe as the top one, but to them, when you can't walk, you can't sit and one person can't see, it is serious.

I understand what the minister is saying. I appreciate what he's saying but I can assure you, Mr. Minister, that we have to find some way. It can be done, these specialists, but I'm just passing on the concerns that I got from the residents down my way.

Also, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands has brought up and has heard on many occasions about the workers from Nova Scotia. Yet you can't go on a 50-foot plot in your camper for mental health that you go every summer, because there's someone within – and there's some park that they pay. Some people pay up to \$3,000, \$4,000 to keep their site.

Medically, I say to the Minister of Health and Community Services, I give you all the credit in the world for the work that you're doing, but there has to be some acknowledgement that if these guidelines can be stretched a bit, if they can be done in a safe manner, we have to look at some of the medical treatment that our residents are going through.

I say to the Minister of Transportation and Works – and I understand that he's probably not the one who came up with these regulations for the outside workers – if we can give an order to stop people coming across the ferry today, why can't we give an order that people from Quebec or people from the high-traffic areas without self-isolation stop from coming to Newfoundland and Labrador? I just don't understand it.

This is what's being raised to us. This is not a criticism because I understand that everybody is working as hard as they can. I understand that totally, Mr. Speaker. But when you have a

person who can't see and can't get in to see a doctor and he looks on TV and here are 40 or 50 workers coming in from all across Canada and they don't have to self-isolate – they're working just like we are here today, side by side. They're going back to the families and they're saying they're essential and we're saying that we're going to look into it. The government is saying we're going to look into that. We'll look into it if they're not essential, yet we can stop people from coming across that ferry right now.

I ask will someone the government, please, if they're in here, if people are in here – and God bless them, they're only people trying to make a living like the rest of us, but if they're coming from high provinces like Quebec – and nothing against Quebec and nothing against Nova Scotia, because a lot of us worked in Nova Scotia, a lot of us went to school in Nova Scotia, nothing against anybody, but if we're going to stop the pandemic, which, again, I give full credit to the individuals, we can't say we're going to look into it, we're going to work with the Construction Association and we're going to go back with the civil. If we can stop them flying in, we can stop them now and say if you're not essential, move on, because we don't want this pandemic to come up.

Mr. Speaker, these are the kind of issues that are being raised with myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. We had a great discussion today on it. He's hearing it with the campsite issue and also with the medical. This is why we need – if there's going to any economic recovery, everybody should be included. This is not the Leader of the Opposition's issue. This is not the Premier's issue. This is the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador's issue. I think everybody in this Legislature can give a contribution – absolutely, no doubt in my mind that we all can give a contribution.

So with the idea of this virtual sitting of the House of Assembly where now there's an independent in Mount Pearl - Southlands who will be a part of that, I think that the independents should be a part of any other process that's going to happen in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I say once again – and I know I'm repeating myself, because I sat down with those individuals who I'm talking about, personally. I was talking to them, personally. I sat with them, personally. The pain that they're going through, the suffering because they're waiting for treatment.

I say to the Minister of Transportation and Works, and I know I'm saying it to you because you answered the question – I've asked this to the House today and I'll ask again – how can somebody explain to me how they were deemed essential workers and what criteria was used? What criteria or influence was in saying we need these 40 or 50 workers to come in, just before it started, just before May 4, they came in, started working, no need for self-isolation?

Someone has to have the answer. The general public, the people who are suffering in the cases that I mentioned earlier in Question Period, in the cases I mentioned earlier where one person can't even stand. They can't do anything until they get an MRI – can't do nothing. Another person who battled cancer, he can hardly see. He's trying to get in. His doctor is trying to get him in. He was told he's not a priority. He can't see. He battled cancer just a little while ago. This is the frustration for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'm not criticizing anybody, but we have to raise the issues that we were asked to do, and I'm doing it on behalf of the residents and I'm doing it on behalf of the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands who also expressed a lot of concerns with that.

I'll take my seat again, Mr. Speaker, and I will support it, but we can look at the galleries here. We have to find a way that people can be present. There's nothing like being present. We're not like Ottawa with 308. There are only 40 of us here; excluding the Speaker, who will be sitting in his Chair, there are 39 of us.

I'm sure if we found some way that we can use the galleries and then we can use other parts here, that we could find a way that everybody could be here. If you have a concern about a bill,

if you have a concern about an issue, that you can stand up here in this House and come down. There are ways we could do it, if not, the virtual sessions are fine again.

I'm looking forward today to answers so that I can bring them back to constituents that I represent on how these exemptions were put in, what criteria was used and why aren't the Members of the government, who are hearing it loud and clear from the general public, that if we can't do this, why can we pass an order to say: excuse me, sorry, you're declared non-essential.

This idea of going back with the Civil Association, this idea of going back with the Construction Association and saying we'll check with you. I can assure you – and I know the person personally, Darin King, I dealt with him a lot – that if Darin King is saying the workers in Newfoundland and Labrador can carry out those duties, they can carry out those duties. This would alleviate a lot of fear, a lot of concern.

Mr. Speaker, any time like this – and I'm sure it's not just me, anybody understands – there's a high level of anxiety. Rightly or wrongly, there's a high level of anxiety. Part of the anxiety is – when you get anxiety you always find some way to get the anxiety put out. When people see workers coming in and they can't get their operation, they can't get in to see their eye specialist or they can't get other procedures done – which is their knee done, their hip done – and they're in a lot of pain, they look for some way and this is one way.

If you look at it technically, about all the trucker drivers coming in, thank the truck drivers, thank the first responders, nurses. Thank all the people who work in grocery stores who are keeping us all fed, thank them all. God bless them all, because a lot of us right now, Mr. Speaker, are in a position that we're reaping their benefits and sometimes putting their own life in danger.

I spoke to a lot of the nurses and I spoke to a couple of doctors on this, it's fear. Everybody that comes through the doors now with a cough or any symptoms, you have to treat them as a possible person with COVID-19. It's just the

reality of it. For all those front-line workers, for all the people who are keeping the stores open for us and for all the pharmacists – and I spoke to several pharmacists – they are actually putting their own lives and families on the line for us.

When we get an opportunity like this here – and the same thing when we have virtual sittings in the House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker – that we're asked to raise concerns, we will. There's nothing like in person but if we can't do it, I'll be supporting the concept of having some way to voice your concerns so that they can be registered in the House of Assembly and registered to government.

I'll just thank the minister for ensuring that an independent will be involved and that will be the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. Again, my last time. I know I'm repeating myself but the people who are suffering today are repeating it to me, the trials and the tribulations that they're going through, what a lot of families are going through. When they see that they can't get their knee, hip, eyes or MRI done and saying, well, we'll consult with the Construction Association, we'll consult with the civil to make sure, instead of saying, boom, we're not putting any other Newfoundlanders and Labradorians at risk for this, Mr. Speaker.

I urge the government to take these steps so that we, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, can say we're doing our best to keep our residents safe, which I have no doubt. I'm not saying that there wasn't a good job done. I'm definitely not saying that, but I'm just raising the concerns that were brought to our attention.

From my understanding, I say to the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island – and to this point. Unless I'm wrong – and I'll stand to be corrected – I wrote Minister Haggie three weeks ago, a month ago, about the workers in the acute care hospital in Corner Brook. Last Friday I went up and I spoke to a few workers. Their best understanding is that local workers are working at the long-term care facility in Corner Brook.

There are people coming in from Nova Scotia who are dropping off their steel, they're

unhooking the trucks and they're getting back in the trucks. In the Corner Brook area, there are local workers. What I was told – and I have pictures, they even sent me pictures – is that there are local workers.

If we could do it for the acute care hospital – and I thank the Minister of Health for passing on the concerns that were expressed four or five weeks ago out on the long-term care site, out on the acute care hospital site. It was taken care of, to the best of my knowledge. I spoke to workers on the site who said, no, all local. There are some from the East Coast on site, that's fine, but they're all local.

So I'll say to the Minister of Transportation and Works, I ask you to act urgently on this, if not only to protect the workers, but the anxiety of people in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There's a motion on the floor respecting hybrid virtual sittings of the House of Assembly during this time of COVID-19. I'm only going to use less than half my time, Mr. Speaker, to just speak briefly to the motion.

These are unprecedented times, Mr. Speaker. No one will question that. There are many firsts that we are all experiencing. Thursday, in a couple of days, will be eight weeks since I sat here in the House of Assembly. I miss it. Those of us who are here, we enjoy participating in the lively, spirited debate, and I see my colleague for Conception Bay East is smiling. I know he missed it, too. We take it seriously, carrying out the people's work, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and we do the best job we can, but at the end of the day we all walk out and we're friends.

Mr. Speaker, when we think about how the world has changed over the last number of

weeks, just yesterday I boarded a flight. First, I was stopped at the border, a border that I went through for the last seven years. I raced off to the airport, and yesterday there were a number of QPP vehicles there. There were FLR officials there. There were Health officials there. It took some time.

I boarded a flight with a big mask, and we landed in St. Anthony. People walked out six feet apart and boarded the flight. Then we landed in Deer Lake and there were a number of gentlemen. People are well spaced on the flight. I thought about, from a business perspective, businesses are being hard hit.

I just open with that, Mr. Speaker, to say these are unprecedented times and there are many firsts. As we think about COVID and as we think about the necessity to ensure that we both carry on the business of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, that important work, that we need to look as well to consider new ways of doing business.

My colleague, my federal MP, just today, for Labrador, just participated in her first virtual sitting. I did see some coverage. There's no doubt about it, Mr. Speaker, if this motion is passed today and we move to virtual sittings there will be some growing pains, there will be some kinks and there will need to be some things to be tweaked.

I have been seven weeks working remotely from home, Mr. Speaker, with my department and with Housing. Daily meetings with executive. We started using Skype for the first time. We have not been without some issues. Sometimes you're in the middle of important conversations and the screens are freezing. Sometimes it looks kind of funny. I did follow federally when they conducted their first virtual sitting and there were some pains they were growing through, Mr. Speaker. Someone would ask a question and they would need to repeat the question because the Speaker didn't hear it and things like that. However, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it's very important.

The business of government, from a department, from a ministerial view point, I can tell you has certainly been continuing; albeit, maybe sometimes slow, but there is also another element of government where things have to come into the Legislature, has to be open for debate and then has to go to a vote as we pass important legislation.

I was thinking as well, Mr. Speaker, about the necessity of connectivity. We are 40 Members in this House from across a pretty – especially when you look at Labrador – vast land, and you may see rural MHAs that may have more challenges. When I was first elected serving my area we were extremely held back with connectivity, but thanks to a recent proposal over the last couple of years, we've seen certain significant improvement in Southern Labrador and in Northern Labrador as well, Mr. Speaker. These are the things we would have to consider as we move forward to carry out virtual sittings of Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

Security and privacy concerns; when we're here we know there are some folks downstairs at the Broadcast Centre that are watching, but everything is pretty secure and private. As we move to things online, what are the safest apps that are out there? I know a number of us now, as we conduct business within our departments, we're using apps like Skype. We've used Zoom a number of times, but certainly security and privacy is something that would have to be looked at.

I thought about also giving consideration to imposing the rules for decorum. We all have rules of decorum that we follow in this Legislature. What does that look like in a virtual sitting? So something that would be necessary to follow out; and, no doubt, as Members of this House, and we all take an oath, we would certainly have to continue to respect the Assembly rules.

I guess some people say we would have to think outside the box. I say we have to think like there is no box, as we find our way through this unprecedented time.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, as well, when you think about the travel costs of bringing Members of the House of Assembly together for Parliament when the House resumes in the spring and in the fall, that as we're able to do some of those sittings virtually, I believe it would save the Treasury money, Mr. Speaker. I think never before has there been a more important time in Newfoundland and Labrador when we look at things like the price of oil and we look at this pandemic that we're working our way through, Mr. Speaker, it's incumbent upon all of us here, as elected officials, to find ways, all ways, that we can save the Treasury money. I believe it would also be a greener option, as it would reduce the carbon emissions of transportation for Members travelling each week.

Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to close now; I just wanted to chime in on the motion. We all recognize the importance of essential travel and maintaining physical distancing to help us get through. There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, if we move toward virtual sessions, there will be challenges. But when we think about ensuring the health and safety of ourselves, our families and our communities, that needs to be the focus as we continue through.

I will just mention Labrador for a moment. When COVID cases began to be on the rise and moved into double digits, people in Labrador were extremely concerned. We have meetings every Saturday with all of the mayors, the AngajukKâks, the Indigenous leaders in Labrador and because we're a small population spread over a large mass, we don't have ICU capacity and things like that so there was some real, genuine concern, a desire to lock down the borders. When I think about that and through that lens, that just adds to me to the necessity of if we can hold virtual Parliament during a pandemic, then it's necessary very much that we do so.

I thank you for the opportunity and I'll certainly be supporting the motion respecting hybrid approach to virtual sittings of Parliament.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to stand – it's always a pleasure to stand in this House to speak on anything, I suppose. This is a different time for everybody. I guess when you think about virtual Parliaments and this motion, I think we all kind of agree we have to find new ways of doing business.

As an MHA, a lot of times we get many callers calling us – and especially during this pandemic, it's uncharted waters for everybody. Quickly I realized, the first week in, we became the go-to people because government was basically, essentially, in transition. There were people working from home. Everything was changing. It was moving on the fly. Orders were coming in on a daily basis, things were changing and the local MHA/MP turned out to be your main points of contact. I think we can all attest – I know I was bombarded. There were questions. No one was complaining. They were wondering how do I do this, where do I get that, what am I going to do, who do I contact, who do I reach out to.

I reached out to lots of ministers opposite. I give them all credit; they've all been very receptive. Actually, it's probably one of the unique times because, politically, I'm probably one of the more politically minded people in this Legislature, as much as anyone else here, but you park the politics by the door because there were bigger things at play. We were dealing with a pandemic. We're still dealing with a pandemic; no cures, no treatments. It's a scary time for a lot of people. In saying that – and we listen to it and we try to offer assurances to our residents as best we can; we try to help them out and I think we all do a good job of that – ultimately, life still has to go on in some form or another.

When we came in here today for Question Period and you're preparing, there was no intent – and I don't think it was portrayed that way – to coming in here and trying to make a scene and get sound bites. These questions we had, we had

just as many more and we could have gone through about two weeks of that. There were questions on education. There were questions to the Minister of Transportation and Works on outside workers. We had questions on oil and gas. We had questions on tourism, camping, health, fiscal, small business. We could go on with that list every day for another two weeks and not hit the points. That stuff still has to be dealt with.

We do this here today, but we have 10 or 11 Members in here. I know I can speak for our caucus, there are a lot of Members here who want to get back in this House. They want to represent their residents. That's what they were elected to do, to represent the district and their constituents. They feel, even though they're accessible by phone and email and they're doing their best to represent their areas – and they all are, everyone is.

There's something about standing in your place in the Legislature and speaking for the people you represent. It's something, until you do it – I guess I couldn't relate to it until I was elected myself. The Minister of Finance, the most experienced fellow, the longest serving person in this Legislature, he obviously gets that too. He can attest to back me up.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. PETTEN: Yes, that's right. We all did at one time.

That's a very important feature in our democracy. We need to find ways around this because I live in hope. I watch the news and I'm not getting the vibe that we're going to be back to anything normal any time soon. That's unfortunate, but that's where we live.

We have to find a new normal. I know it's been used a lot by a lot of people, and you hear it a lot of times, commentary when they talk about the COVID. We have to find that new normal. Things will not be the same again. Someone compared it to 9/11, how we made changes. Well, I think this COVID will probably evolve into something like that. We'll look back in a

couple of years' time and say, my God, look what we used to do. It's amazing we did that then and how we did it.

Things will change. That's society. That's the way we live. I think we'll get some form of normalcy eventually, but in the absence of that, we need to be legislators. We all represent 40 districts in this province; it's \$8 billion to \$9-billion budgets. There are 500,000 people out there that depend on us to make decisions, whether it's on education, whether it's on the economy. Health, obviously, that's top of mind for everyone.

Finding ways around that and forming this Committee to study ways to have a virtual sitting, I think it's a very good idea and we obviously support it as well, the things out there – I won't go on longer because I just want to bring a few points. I guess there are a couple of cautions that I would like to highlight.

As we've noticed with these virtual sittings, people should wear pants; people should be careful of who's in their house with them. They should notify people when they're on their tablet or what have you because there have been ever so many embarrassing moments. I only heard a few this morning – actually, brought a chuckle, but they're not too funny if it happened to you.

Learn the buttons on your computer. Learn your mute. I mean, there are a lot of features that we all need to learn. I'll be honest, back when the pandemic kicked in, our group wanted to do the Zoom or they wanted to have virtual. Now, I've had Zoom Friday nights, but now, they're not meant for this House, but I really didn't understand the concept. I was going with it and I said, yeah, I'll do it on the fly. So I have had the option of learning in a better environment when you're dealing with all your friends.

When you're dealing with in this reality – and I watched federal Parliament and I noticed the minister of Health, Minister Hajdu, she was there and she was missing her volume button. Every time she was speaking, she was muted and it was pretty funny. This one was having trouble and a lot of people were technology

challenged like me and I know a lot of people probably in this Legislature. Our Opposition House Leader is worse than me, so that tells you something.

We all struggle. That's something we have to work and learn on, but that's just putting a bit of laughter to the moment.

We do support this virtual sitting and we look forward to what's going to come out of this Committee. Like I said, we could be like this for the foreseeable future. All other Members of this House who are not here today, they're watching this and they want to be here, so maybe this will give them some sort of opportunity to represent the districts they represent so proudly.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just reviewing some of the notes I had here.

So with regard to this, I guess new, challenging times require measures that address those challenges. It sort of warms the cockles of my heart in some ways because we're about to look at how do we carry on the proceedings of the House and what technology do we need to do that. That's the kind of question that schools have been asking for years, so it's good to see that we probably realize the need for the training and the technology that's going to come with it.

Yes, the key thing, if you've been following, is that, in any of this, always wear pants. It's going to be the key thing, I think, for everyone here. We've seen the shares on Facebook, but I've also heard from here locally – and I won't say where they got the information – from people who were watching their boss chair the meeting in a housecoat that didn't cover everything totally.

So, I think there's going to be a little bit of learning, a good humour grace and things that go

with it. Certainly, we've heard with the technology, if you look at Zoom when it comes to the security piece, but all those things can be addressed in some way, shape or form.

I know in other organizations I've been involved with; committees were always located in the vicinity of where the Chair was, so that would cut down on a province-wide committee but locally based. Other organizations I've been with, yes, we would have accommodation of both virtual and in-person meetings, but a lot of the meetings would be done by using technology. They would be virtual meetings because there's no way you could bring everyone together from across the country in these organizations.

I will say this, and I don't know about anyone else here, but working from home is not all it's cracked up to be and being on a phone all the time, but I temper that with the knowledge, you know what, I'm working. There's a job to be done and there are decisions to be made, and every now and again you're able to help an individual.

I look at this, again, there is the possibility here – and I really would like to see how, if this is actually implemented, where we actually use it. At the end of this, I know it's sort of a sunset for December, but if by the end of it we say, you know what, some of this can carry on. I'm thinking of committee work in terms of the convenience and its cost savings.

My colleague across the House has already brought this up about a cost-saving measure, greening. So, I'm not suggesting that maybe all meetings can be held this way. Sometimes you do need to meet in person because part of the in-person meeting is the side conversations that one is likely to have with his or her colleague, but I think there's a combination here. My knowledge, in my brief experience in this House of trying to establish a meeting with people, especially if they have to be back in their district, it becomes very challenging if you're looking for that face to face, but technology does allow for that and without straining the patience of people.

I think also there's an opportunity here for us to lead by example. Certainly, what we're demonstrating is that just because we can't meet in person in the full capacity, with full membership, we are looking for ways to make this work and carry on the business of the province. That's the key thing. Certainly, with regard to the mechanism by which we're going to come up with some sort of a virtual sitting of the House of Assembly or virtual approach is the collaborative nature and the all-party nature of the committee itself.

I do firmly believe – again, I come from a background where there wasn't any partisan politics. To be honest with you, in my previous role it really didn't matter who was in power whether it was Liberal, PC, or NDP for that matter – not that there was a chance in the NDP in any length of time – it didn't make any difference, I was advocating for members. I think there's a recognition that at least here we all have something to bring to this. Regardless of party stripe, regardless of political background, we're looking for a solution and we're looking for one that works for everyone, and I like that approach to things.

Again, it gives a very clear time frame when we have to have something in place, July 1. Because what else are we going to be doing on July 1 except self-isolating anyway. There won't be any barbeques, unless we're doing it remotely. A Skype barbeque and virtual hamburgers, it might not be the same thing but, nevertheless.

MR. CROCKER: (Inaudible.)

MR. J. DINN: Most of us could.

With that, I think we will have something, it may not be perfect, but I think it'll be a good approach. It's something we can test run and modify as we go on. If by the time December rolls around we find, do you know what, there are elements of this that do work, that we like, especially since we'll probably have the technology in place, it will be a shame to see it go to waste. But I would like to see this as an opportunity that by the – and God willing, that there's an actual vaccine and we can maybe get

back to a normal life, whatever that is, sooner rather than later. I think there's an opportunity to take some of these innovations that we've been forced to take on by necessity and maybe incorporate them into practices.

The one thing I can say, my experience in this House, there are an awful lot of arcane rules and procedures that take a bit of getting used to, so here's one step towards modernizing how we do business here.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Seeing no further speakers, is the House ready for the question?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call second reading of Bill 34.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that this bill be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: Which bill was this?

MR. OSBORNE: Bill 34.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that Bill 34 entitled, An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act And The Liquor Corporation Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act And The Liquor Corporation Act.” (Bill 34)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure to stand and speak to this particular legislation today. This is legislation that has been called for by a number of organizations, including the Board of Trade, the Employers’ Council, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, as well as Restaurants Canada.

Essentially with this legislation, Mr. Speaker, restaurants with liquor licences, who are regulated under the *Liquor Control Act*, including craft breweries that are regulated under the *Liquor Corporation Act*, will be permitted to – well restaurants, lounges, hotels, et cetera, who prepare a meal will be permitted to deliver a bottle of wine or a bottle of beer, what have you, with the meal.

The breweries, wineries or distilleries would be able to provide product from their breweries, wineries or distilleries. They would be able to deliver during the pandemic only. This is a temporary measure that would allow at least some additional business opportunity for these businesses who are going through a very strained time. There will also be some regulation requirements, Mr. Speaker, but those can be done outside the House once the House votes on this piece of legislation. Should it pass, whether or not there are any amendments, we can make regulations or change the regulations to suit what has been done here in the Legislature today.

This will temporarily lift restrictions on restaurants, as I’d said, or delivery or take-out orders, as well as the wineries, distilleries and breweries. They will require age verification by delivery drivers. The NLC will provide enforcement and will be tasked to verify that retailers are complying with the new legislation or regulations.

Mr. Speaker, by the way, for anybody who’s wondering, who figures this is an effort get more revenue to the NLC, the cost of their enforcement division and following through on this, they believe, will be more expensive the additional revenue that’s gained as a result of being able to deliver from these establishments. This is purely designed to give businesses that are suffering as a result of COVID a bit of an opportunity for some additional revenue. It’s about removing some restrictions that are in place during a unique and challenging time.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses, we often say, are the economic backbone of the province and that is true. They employ some 40 per cent of people that are working in the province. And right now those small businesses – or any small businesses – government, both federally and provincially and I believe, to a certain degree, municipally, are looking for ways to help small businesses as we deal with COVID and establish new normals, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully, as we get through the five phases that have been outlined by the chief medical officer of health and restrictions can be lifted or eased up to a certain degree and we continue to evolve the new normals.

We don’t how long this COVID situation is going to last. In large part, it probably depends on when a vaccine may be produced and able to be supplied, Mr. Speaker. So, to a large degree, we’re still dealing with unknowns. While we’re going through COVID, this will help small businesses to a large degree. As I had indicated, government continues to find ways to assist small businesses. We will continue to work with and speak with small businesses in the province to try and establish ways that we’re able to assist, but this is one small way, Mr. Speaker.

I don’t anticipate that this is going to bring in huge amount of revenues to restaurants. As we know, if they’re selling a bottle with a meal, the bottle will be sold at a premium, so there will be a bit of a markup what the NLC would normally sell that bottle of wine for. I don’t anticipate that you’re going to see a big rush on this, but at least it’s some additional revenue for these businesses that are crying out for help.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This piece of legislation, it's a good move. As the minister just said, rightly so, I don't think it's going to be a huge revenue boost for restaurant owners. In real time, in normal times you went the restaurant, you bought your wine or your liquor or alcohol at the restaurant because you had no other choice. You went in there and that was part of the full package deal. I guess now people at home will order out and a lot of people still will pick up their own liquor – they're ordering curbside pickup or whatever they're doing with the NLC anyway.

People will say they'll take advantage of it because there was a demand from restaurateurs and customers, but it's a little boost to them and it's a good thing. We have no issue with that.

I think it's important to highlight that bars are included in this, lounges and bars. They are really struggling. Back when the COVID recently hit, VLTs was basically what a lot of bar owners survived on. They sell limited foods. So this change of being able to do takeout has no impact on them. Now, there were some changes brought about this week, which were good, about the licensing rebate and some returning of alcohol – which is all good.

I'm not critical. Again, I try to always pick up the points, because we talk about the big stuff and sometimes the little stuff gets left in the wind. We're bringing in this to help restaurateurs. When you order a food delivery, your takeout and they can get wine pairings, people are into letting the chef decide the meal and the proper wine to go with it. People are into that and good for them. But we also (inaudible) a group, and I'm glad the minister pointed out that government gets the fact small businesses are struggling. During QP today, we highlighted those issues as well.

It's something we can't take our fingers off that pulse. Recently, in the CBS area Chamber of Commerce, I sat in on a meeting with a lot of business owners. All the federal programs, most of them are termed to medium size. Not large, but they're more in the medium size. Most of my district is made up of small business. Most of them have one or two employees; they don't qualify for the CEBA, the wage subsidy. None of those federal programs really suit them.

Bar owners fall in that same group. Most bar owners are pretty well – like I said, the VLTs pay their wages, pay their overhead and they make whatever. None of them are getting rich quick. Especially as time has gone on, that industry has really struggled and there has been a dip outside of George Street and a few hotspots.

But on the restaurant piece too, they're struggling obviously equally as well, but they still can survive – and it's very limited. I'm not saying they're making any money, but they have some option to be able to do takeout delivery where bar owners don't. So bringing in the ability to do that is a good thing. There is no issue here, and I'm not going to go on for long on it, but I think it's important to always highlight groups that may be, not falling through the cracks, but what we do in here, bringing their issues to the floor of this House.

I know I speak to a lot of bar owners, and I'm sure most Members in this Legislature, we all have them in our districts. There's not a lot out there for them either. And restaurant owners, we hear from a lot of them. Some of them are more vocal than others. I'm concerned about how many restaurants will actually survive this COVID outbreak and what will be the new normal. When we come back to reality, it's only the real vibrant, stable restaurants, I think, will survive. A lot of them have been closed for so long, it's a real struggle. So if this helps them stay alive and stay in business, we're all for it, obviously.

Again, I'm glad to hear the minister reiterate for small businesses and for other bar owners. There are some measures brought in, but we can never

forget –and we’ll, obviously, as Opposition, hold government to the fire to make sure that those issues are dealt with and we don’t forget anyone along the way. On that note, we will be supporting this.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I’ll just stand again and support the bill with the minister. I just noticed on the phone there, there are no new cases again today in Newfoundland and Labrador. I also notice now from reading it here, that 241 people now have recovered. So we’re on the right track.

I’m thanking everybody again, the health care workers and all the people involved who are keeping us safe; 241 out of 259, leaving 18 people right now. Hopefully, the ones who had to self-isolate last night will be safe. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. I know what happened there was a situation which no one predicted could have happened, but it did, and the steps were taken. So that’s good news again today for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Just on this bill also, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the bill, and also the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. We discussed this and it’s good, because they are struggling. There is absolutely no doubt. Again, as I mentioned, there are struggles. I know a lot of places in Corner Brook, for example, who bring food, can bring some beer.

I had one person who mentioned: well, what’s the big deal of going to a corner store? There are people with a lot of anxiety of going out in public, going to a corner store where you may bump into five or six or seven people. This is a way that if you want to have a bottle of wine, if you want to have something with your dinner that’s being brought to you, that they can do it.

A lot of distilleries here in Newfoundland and Labrador also and I know, with a lot of breweries here, they are small businesses and they work hard and now to be able to deliver some alcohol – because you’re not going to stop people from having a few drinks; you’re not going to do it. People have the anxiety.

I see some of the relief that the minister has given to a lot of the small businesses around, which is a good idea. Again, it’s great that we’re doing this, but somewhere we should have a side plan – how are we going to recover this after? Not recover the cost, but recover Newfoundland and Labrador. I understand people are struggling. I don’t think there’s a Member in this House or any Member that’s watching outside who haven’t had concerns brought to them about small businesses struggling.

I know, Mr. Speaker, people in my family who have small businesses, they work hard. This 9 to 5 is not the way they operate in a small business. They’re worrying about tomorrow; they’re worrying about if they have everything done for today. When you get a pandemic like they’re facing now and their revenue is down, they have to work that much harder and they can’t see any light at the end of the tunnel, this will help. It’s a small step, but it’s a step that they’ve been asking for and it’s a step that you may not be able to bring them back into profit but it will definitely ensure that a lot of them may be able to survive until they can get back on their feet again.

I say to the minister, I will be supporting this bill and to the measures that the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation has taken to help out also. I think there may be even some other breweries that may be looking for exemptions later or maybe having discussions on this also. I know, from when I was with Service NL, the amount of water, the amount that they serve, they consume or sell, that they may be struggling with it also. I know the minister will be looking into that somehow at a later date.

Once again, this is something that I don’t think anybody in this House expected that we would be bringing to this House, six, seven or eight

months ago, a bill to help reduce revenue for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador because of helping the small businesses. But when a situation like this arises, we need to step up, and I support it.

Again, I say to the Minister of Finance – and I understand the position you're in. Probably I don't, actually, because I haven't got it all in front of me like you do, but we have to try to look at some way of how we are going to put our economy back in shape once this pandemic passes. Because it will pass – it will pass. We must try to take the steps to ensure that we're ready for that also. It's a tough job. It's going to be relentless for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, like every other province in Canada, and Canada, as a country, it will be. I feel confident that the backbone of the economy, I always said, are the small businesses. We have to ensure what we can to keep small businesses operating, keep them viable, to keep them in place for when the economy does rebound, is that we have an opportunity to let them be contributors back to the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands had a very extensive discussion on this. I know a lot of the breweries that will help out with this, so we will be supporting this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We also – and by, we, I mean me – will support this bill. That's the royal 'we' in this case.

I'll tell you, for a while there when this started out it looked like the highlight of my week would be taking out garbage on garbage day and wheeling the cart down and wheeling it back. I say that jokingly because you wondered – life was upended in many ways.

I remember the last restaurant that my wife and I and a couple of friends went to was the Green Door. That seemed so long ago. It's easy enough to go to St. John's downtown in most of the

restaurants and they're blocked because people do like to get out.

I had read an article about how things will be changed as a result of COVID-19, post-COVID-19. One of the things they noted is that people will get used to the idea of cooking at home or ordering in. I don't think so. I think when it comes time, when people start getting back on their feet, they're going to be looking for that option of going out because there's the social aspect of it. We know we're paying a premium for the food, but it's the service. It's everything that goes with it.

There's no doubt about it, a lot of small restaurants and owners – there are a lot of small business owners who contacted me. There was real fear and panic as to how they're going to get through this at first. This is unprecedented. We've heard all sorts of things but there's no road map. We're in uncharted territory and so on and so forth. We've been gradually finding our ways through it. Hopefully, if it's like the last pandemic in 1918, we won't have to deal with it for another hundred years or so.

Certainly here, what I've noticed is that a lot of businesses, a lot of restaurants in town have come up with some rather creative ways to deal with the pandemic. I think of Piatto, who gives you the do-it-yourself pizza kits, and you go home and you make it yourself. Manna Bakery, the same thing – they provide the kits, here it is, but they've been giving delivery door-to-door service which, I must say, is pretty creative in not only keeping the employees busy and on salary and on wage, but also, I think more importantly, reminding citizens, people in the community that they're still here.

Certainly, here is an opportunity, with the restrictions in place, that gives restaurants one more avenue or one more way of increasing the value added to their meals, giving people another reason to order out.

Keep in mind, we don't go to a restaurant anyway at the best of times because we want a cheap meal or because we can probably do it more cheaply at home. It's everything that goes

with it. The ambiance and so on and so forth, the comradery, but here we have an opportunity to make it that much easier for a small business, small restaurants, small business owners to make a go of it and to get through this pandemic, this crisis.

Really, what they're asking for, they're not necessarily looking for a government handout or financial assistance. What they're looking for is some relaxing of the regulations to allow them to carry on their business so they can take care of themselves and their employees.

The only concern that I heard was from some small craft breweries about the possibility of third-party delivery of alcohol and craft beer, that somehow it could open them up to liability or to their product being delivered to places where it shouldn't be delivered. They wanted to have control over the delivery so that it wouldn't go through a third-party delivery service, like SkipTheDishes, as an example. They weren't too worried about restaurants, but when it came to delivering their own product – because they want to be able to make sure that the product was delivered safely and that the people receiving the product were actually of legal age and so on and so forth.

If I'm reading it correctly, the legislation here seems to address that. Maybe the minister in his closing remarks can verify that, but I'm looking through the briefing notes and the Explanatory Notes here that there seems to be, at least here, a restriction by the licensee or an employee of the licensee as opposed to contracting a third party which wouldn't be. And, if not, there seems to be also the option here of revoking anyone who's abusing this privilege, to revoke the licence.

I think there is certainly enough safeguards here to prevent abuse. One thing about delivering alcohol to home is that you don't have to worry, you can drink responsibly because you're not going anywhere after anyway, you're stuck there.

All in all, this is a good piece of very creative legislation. It's just a simple change in

legislation that will allow businesses to adapt and respond to this situation.

With that, thank you very much, and we'll be supporting this legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. The Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, if he speaks now he'll close the debate.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The point raised by my colleague from St. John's Centre, I know that we can have delivery by a third party. It does indicate here that it's with the delivery of a meal, so the act doesn't indicate whether the same would apply to a craft brewery or not, but I'm certainly – if it's the will of the House, when we draft the regulations we can ensure that it's only with the delivery of a meal. Again, I'd put that question to the House if that is the will of the House. We do have to draft regulations. The regulations will reflect what's passed in the Legislature.

It does say here that delivery by a third party, it references with the delivery of a meal. It also indicates that whoever is delivering has to be 19 years of age and have completed the Serve Responsible NL program to ensure that the person who's delivering is qualified to deliver and, as well, prohibit the delivery to anybody under the age of 19 years of age. I hope that answers the Member's question.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 34, An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act And The Liquor Corporation Act, be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act And The Liquor Corporation Act. (Bill 34)

MR. SPEAKER: The bill has now been read a second time.

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act And The Liquor Corporation Act,” read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 34)

MR. SPEAKER: The Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, that this House now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 34.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole and consider the said bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, that the House resolve itself a Committee of the Whole, the Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Bennett): The Chair recognizes the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I’m just going to for one second on –

CHAIR: We have to put the question forward first.

Order, please!

We’re now considering Bill 34, An Act to Amend the Liquor Control Act and the Liquor Corporation Act.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act And The Liquor Corporation Act.” (Bill 34)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just thought it was going to be the point of privilege that was brought up a while back.

I just say to the Minister of Finance, and very briefly, be careful about putting in has to be the delivery of food because some of those breweries don’t have food at their premises, so it would be just going in. That’s all I’m saying, that if you put in the regulations that it has to go with food, there may be some breweries that may not be serving so they may not be delivering meals, just their brand itself.

That’s all. I just want to make the minister aware of that and he can research that before it comes up to regulation, just so we don’t exclude one or two and have to come back to the Legislature and make the change again.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: No, that's addressed in the act. For a club, restaurant, hotel, whatever, they have to deliver food with it. That's under the *Liquor Control Act*. For a brewery, winery or distillery, it's under the *Liquor Corporation Act*. They don't have to have a meal with it. They would be able to do a home delivery. If you have a craft brewery and somebody wishes to purchase a dozen beer from the craft brewery, for example, they don't have to have a meal under the *Liquor Control Act*. It's two separate acts we're amending.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Just to follow up on that, I may be jumping ahead a bit, but the issue had a statement and a question with regard to – the concern was with third party delivery. Not by the couple of people who contacted me from craft breweries, it had to do with they want to be able to deliver their product, and that's allowed here, but they're concerned with having a third party organization doing that delivery where they would basically surrender – that company or organization would pick up the product and deliver it to the house. What they're looking at is they've lost control over it at that point in time.

The concern I have, too – and I had asked – is this the same for all craft brewers? It's a good question. Within the metro area that might not be an issue where they have the delivery vehicles. I'm not sure how that would be for craft brewers in the rural areas; I think of down on the Bonavista Peninsula, for example.

I want to draw attention to it but, at the same time, I don't want something in there that's going to basically – where people who have the wherewithal to do it, their own delivery vehicle can do it, but now a small craft brewery in an area where they don't have the truck, for example, or they don't have the vehicle, they have no choice but to hire someone, they're not put at a disadvantage.

What I ask the minister is that at least we be cognizant of that, that it be monitored and if it needs to be modified, that we can do that. That's

what I'm looking at here. While I appreciate the concerns, it's not like the people who are contacting me represented the organization for all craft brewers, let's say. It's a valid concern, I think, but at the same time here you don't want to end up penalizing – because these are very small businesses and they're trying to survive.

For the most part, I don't think the type of product that a craft brewery is making is going to find its way to an all-night party on Friday night. It's a different kind of drinking altogether.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Seeing no other speakers, shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 4 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 to 4 inclusive carry?

The Chair recognizes the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just a quick question for the minister that there's no end date – will this piece of legislation have to be repealed by the House itself?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: No, the intent of this legislation is only during the COVID situation. So once we determine that we're out of the COVID situation or business returns to normal, this will be repealed.

CHAIR: Seeing no other questions, shall clauses 2 to 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

CLERK: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows.

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act And The Liquor Corporation Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 34 without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed Bill 34 without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move the Committee rise and report Bill 34.

CHAIR: Is it the pleasure of the House for the Committee to rise and report Bill 34 without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 34 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole has reported that the Committee has considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 34 carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I call for third reading of Bill 34.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Government House Leader that Bill 34 be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill now be read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act And The Liquor Corporation Act. (Bill 34)

MR. SPEAKER: The bill is now read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act And The Liquor Corporation Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 34)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call second reading of Bill 36.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, that Bill 36 be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Temporary Variation Of Statutory Deadlines Act. (Bill 36)

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 36, An Act To Amend The Temporary Variation Of Statutory Deadlines Act, now be read a second time.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just speak briefly to this bill. The last time the House sat during COVID-19, a similar bill like this was brought in actually to extend the deadlines to the next sitting of the House of Assembly. It enabled us to move forward with other sittings of the House of Assembly in the coming weeks so that we wouldn't have to do this bill every time, because this bill that was brought in in the last sitting of the House actually expired on the next sitting of the House. So with the changes we're making today, this bill, Bill 36, *Temporary Variation of Statutory Deadlines Act*, will now expire when Interim Supply expires on September 30.

This is just to bring it inline so that every time the House sits in the coming weeks and months, we wouldn't actually have to bring in this bill on every sitting. With that, there are lots of deadlines here that we are extending just for good practice for those that are affected by these deadlines.

Mr. Speaker, with that being said, I'll take my chair and listen to hon. Members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's indeed an honour to stand here again under these challenging circumstances to join my colleagues here and those at home who would love to be here in debate and doing the work of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's unfortunate that we have to do it in this setting right now, but it's a reality of the challenges we're all facing, not only in Newfoundland and Labrador but in this great country of ours, but around the world. We do it to ensure that we can still operate as normal as possible in the situation that's not in any way, shape or form normal in our society right now.

The piece of legislation that we've already passed – two and we're on our third piece this afternoon – is a testament of co-operation; it's a testament of addressing what are the key, important things that need to be done immediately to ensure that there's some fluency and as much normality as possible in the operations of government as we go through the challenges that we face here.

We have had an opportunity to look at some of these. Some of them have been moment's notice because we identify something that has to be changed, but we're all cognizant of that and we all realize that the legislation being put forward here is to benefit how we operate in the House of Assembly, how we operate as the civil service and how we operate as the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As we voted for the last two and we talk about this one, this one is perhaps the easiest of all. It was probably a little contentious the last time we passed it because we weren't quite sure. I think it was the first time in perhaps years, decades, that we had to look at what would be meant by the next sitting of the House of Assembly. At that time we didn't realize what the next sitting of the House of Assembly would be. We thought this would move on fairly quickly; we would get back to normality. Now we realize it's a whole different approach to how we operate in our society.

To make things flow the way they should and to protect the integrity of the House and the ability of government to govern and the civil service to do their jobs, we've made a new amendment to it, and that will take us to the 30th of September. The people at home who are watching, they remember back some five weeks ago when we were in the House the last time we sat in the same type of sitting on some pieces of legislation. One of the ones was around Interim Supply and ensuring that there was enough money to operate government. We came back with an amendment to that to bring us until September 30. This will fall in line with that.

We're all hoping that we're back to some sense of normality. We're hoping that the House of Assembly can open in the same form it had before or through a virtual process that we just passed as part of the process so all of our colleagues can be engaged and the general public can have a better understanding of the process and the legislation we're passing.

This ensures that the finances of the operation of government and any other thing that may be necessary that falls within those variations around timing of dates, reports, discussion topics that may have to be done, different line departments, agreements that have to be adhered to, can be done in a timely fashion.

We agree with this. We do hope that at the expiry of this we don't have to extend it for any reason, other than we come back to the House of Assembly in a normal process, have a discussion around a budget and see where we are from a financial point of view about legislation that reflects improving people's lives, and about Newfoundlanders and Labradorians feeling safe and getting back to a normal lifestyle again.

Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting this. We look forward to moving on to our next piece of legislation.

Thank you, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, again, I'll just stand and get the opportunity, on behalf of myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, to stand up and say we support this, instead of having to come back probably next week or two weeks, three weeks, a month, two months and go through this again.

We will be steady. We will be supporting this, and I will, on behalf of my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. I agree with the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island that is the right way to go to ensure that all the issues will be resolved now. Hopefully we'll be back before the end of September, but if we're not, that deadline has been put in place now to resolve a lot of those issues.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'll raise the issue of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and not unique to the rest of Canada and all the other provinces, that we are going through a difficult time. We all must make changes in the way – even in the Legislature – we operate. This is one amendment that was brought in that we're all going to agree with in this House. I just want to say we support this, that we're going to be a part of it, and I will be voting for this.

Mr. Speaker, all throughout this you could see today that we're expressing our concerns, we're having our issues passed forward to the government, but we're doing it in a way that we understand that this is a pandemic and we are all trying to work together to resolve issues. Sometimes we're flying by the seat of our pants because we get issues coming up that concern our constituents, our towns, our municipalities, but we're all trying to work together and work through this.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss here now – when you talk about the deadline at the end of September. I would be remiss, of course – and I have a habit of speaking a few things that's on my mind. I have to recognize the MPs. I know the MPs – and a lot of issues that are happening here. We're flooded with phone calls but I know I've been speaking to Ms. Gudie Hutchings and I put it out in the public media about the work she's been doing. I've been talking to Yvonne

Jones, another one, about the great work she's doing for her constituents up in that district also.

While we're here now – and a lot of issues concerning the businesses – I have to recognize the work of the MPs and their office because sometimes there are a lot of things that are happening now through the income support that people are calling us and we pass it on to the MPs. I know the MPs that I've been dealing with and speaking to, Ms. Hutchings and Yvonne Jones, they're flooded with calls and I know they're doing what they can to get things done.

When you go across the province and you look at Ken McDonald, I'm sure he's doing the same thing. I'm sure they are and I'm sure Scott Simms – I say the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay – he's working hard and he's working collaboratively with your office and the office in Grand Falls and Gander. I'm sure Seamus O'Regan is doing it also. But I know the ones that I'm dealing with and we're speaking to and in conversations with have been.

Churence Rogers is another person who has a rural district with a lot of concerns and I'm sure that he's handling a lot of calls also. I know Ms. Hutchings, that I'm in contact with her. We had a teleconference with a town council last week. I know Ms. Yvonne Jones, who was a colleague of mine here in this House, who was a good friend of mine. I know how hard she's working up in that district. I can tell you, God bless them because the number of calls that we're getting, I'm sure they're getting a lot more than what we're working with and dealing with.

To all the MPs, I just wanted to pass on my thank you to you and especially to the two that I'm dealing with, Ms. Hutchings and Yvonne Jones, for your hard work and dedication and to the other five also. You're all pitching in also to help out the best we can to help people who are in a lot of anxiety, a lot of trying times, a lot of financial times. To the MPs, you're doing a great job. I'm hearing all the feedback.

Sometimes we feel things should be done quicker. We feel it because we're getting the

pressure from our constituents that there's a dire situation, but when it all works out, they all work as hard as they can to get what they can. Sometimes people think we should work quicker, too, so then we get the calls also. But to the MPs, I just have to recognize their work here in this House also. To Yvonne Jones, keep up the good work; to Ms. Gudie Hutchings, keep up the good work and thank you for assisting me with some of the inquiries that I had and helping out constituents in the district.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to let you know that my colleagues in the Third Party and I will be supporting this bill.

Thank you very much and let's get on with it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

If he speaks now, he will close the debate.

MR. CROCKER: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Coming from my colleague opposite, the Member for St. John's Centre, I'll just say thank you so we can get on with the next bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 36, An Act To Amend The Temporary Variation Of Statutory Deadlines Act, be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Temporary Variation Of Statutory Deadlines Act. (Bill 36)

MR. SPEAKER: The bill has now been read a second time.

When shall the said bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole?

MR. CROCKER: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Temporary Variation Of Statutory Deadlines Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 36)

MR. SPEAKER: The Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 36.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, the Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Bennett): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 36, An Act To Amend The Temporary Variation Of Statutory Deadlines Act.

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows.

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Temporary Variation Of Statutory Deadlines Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 36.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 36.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate, Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 36 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 36 without amendment.

What shall the report be received?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, that Bill 36 be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Temporary Variation Of Statutory Deadlines Act. (Bill 36)

MR. SPEAKER: The bill has now been read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and that its title be on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Temporary Variation Of Statutory Deadlines Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 36)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call second reading of Bill 37.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, that Bill 37, An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012, be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 37, An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012." (Bill 37)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to be back in the House again. I have, as always, come adequately prepared, if not over adequately prepared, with a sheet of speaking points here. I think in the interest of time and condensing this, our challenge during COVID-19 has been to ensure that we have sufficient skilled personnel to rise to meet any surge in demand for the health care system.

Certainly, one of the elements from the snow event was an awareness that perhaps it escaped our attention that pharmacy services were really crucial during that period. The concern then during our current situation is that with what's happened in other jurisdictions and a potential to really stretch the health care system beyond any reasonable projections we might have made, we've gone back at our various regulations through the Health Professionals council, through the various other legal instruments that we have that actually govern licensing of, particularly, self-regulating professions.

For various reasons, we find ourselves now looking at the Pharmacy Act. Essentially, this bill was reworked and passed by this House in 2012. It registers both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians; it provides the usual self-regulatory powers for a body in terms of discipline and the rest of it.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board is the entity that's responsible for regulating and it's also responsible for disciplinary processes. You will notice, maybe, that we have been able under regulation, with a lot of other professions, to actually work with the regulatory body – say, for example, in the realm of nursing or such – to alter, through either LGIC or ministerial authority, their ability to register certain classes of persons under their act. Because of the way the Pharmacy Act was in actual fact written, this is not possible to do for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians; hence, our presence here in the House today. This has to be done through a piece of legislation to actually amend the act.

What we're looking at is a category common to all the others of emergency registration. So it would allow, in this particular instance, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to be licensed in a more expeditious manner than is currently the case. As a result of this, it is possible an individual acquiring a licence under an emergency category may not be required to meet all of the requirements that normally would be the case for a pharmacist or a pharmacy tech. However, what those requirements would specifically be would be something that the Pharmacy Board, having the necessary technical and knowledge-based skills, would be in a position to determine.

What this amendment does is allows them the option to basically bring back pharmacists, for example, who have recently retired who may not have kept up with their CPD and such, into practice. We've done this for nurses, medical lab techs, respiratory therapists, LPNs, social workers and the medical regulations under the Medical Act already possessed such a category for physicians.

Essentially, what we do here is we add an emergency registration provision to the act that allows the format that's used in other health professions to be applied to pharmacists. So the creation of these is ideally positioned to allow us to respond to a major, or potential major, shortage of skills. Pharmacists and pharmacy techs are community and institutional based and, really, it's about ensuring uninterrupted access to medications, medication review and other skills that pharmacists and pharmacy techs would bring. If other professions that I haven't listed identify themselves as being in a vulnerable position, we'd certainly be prepared to work with them.

That's the rationale for this act. In terms of the detail, we wouldn't require applicants to have all of the registration requirements. Some of those are time consuming. They would be as an emergency registrant utilized under limited circumstances. Firstly, the Pharmacy Board itself must determine there's an immediate need for these professionals as a result of an actual or potential threat to public health, safety or welfare. As well, a provincial or federal minister of Health could make a request for enacting this piece. The current COVID pandemic would allow the board to register individuals, for example, under these categories.

There are three ways that pharmacists or pharmacy techs would then become registered. It would simply take those who are currently registered in another province or territory and allow them to have registration within this province.

The second would allow pharmacists or techs who've completed their education program in the last 12 months but haven't yet completed their required examinations to become registered. That's germane at the moment, because a lot of courses have had cancellations and deferrals because of the logistics of organizing examinations in a pandemic. That would enable us to utilize people who'd fulfilled all the educational requirements but hadn't got the piece of paper yet because of the epidemic itself.

The third would allow a pharmacist or a pharmacy tech, who was previously registered in this province, to reregister and so that would effectively recycle pharmacists and techs in an expeditious way. The emergency provisions contained here would also allow the board to add in some additional requirements, should the board feel that appropriate in an individual case. The board can also impose terms and conditions or restrictions, and that is a kind of check on balance against the expedited process.

A registration under this emergency provision would be time limited, could be renewed by the board as required and it can also be revoked by the board at any time. It's contingent on the need being there and it's also contingent on the board being comfortable with that continuing.

The disciplinary processes and all the other things would still apply to these temporary registrants; it wouldn't be that there would be a different standard of practice for one versus the other. So if a member of the public had a concern, they could register a complaint with the Pharmacy Board in the same way they would about any pharmacist.

Essentially, that's the Coles Notes version. I'm happy to listen to comments from my colleagues across the House and look forward to Committee.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, it's an honour to stand here and talk to some legislation that's pertinent, any time that we speak in this House, but particularly now as we go through the challenges around the COVID-19 and ensuring that we have the appropriate, certified professionals to be able to provide health care. In this case, this is the piece of legislation that we're amending, the Pharmacy Act itself, to reflect being able to ensure that there's not a shortage of these professionals.

We all know and we have full respect for the pharmacists, the pharmacy technicians, the business side of it, the process that they operate under, the supplies that they provide and the service that's so valuable to the people of our province.

As the minister noted, we saw the real challenges and, at the same time, the value of the pharmacists, in particular on the Northeast Avalon during the Snowmageddon challenge back in January. At the end of the day, people are still having to avail of that particular service.

There may be certain services we can put on hold for a period of time, but people's medications particularly, and the dispensing of that medication, is primary – not only a necessity, but it's a life-or-death scenario you're dealing with on a day-to-day basis.

Understanding and appreciating the needs and the professionalism and the availability and the process and commitment the pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and the business owners of pharmacies do to ensure that we have that is primary.

As was outlined, the Pharmacy Board themselves, their responsibility is, as the regulatory process, to oversee the licensing, the administrative processes, the disciplinary – the lobbying, to a certain degree – for changes within that process; working with outside entities, the educational facilities, to ensure that the professional levels that are necessary to be able to offer this valued health care service are provided.

So changing the act here unfortunately is having to be done because of circumstances, but it's reflective of, unfortunately, the circumstance. We've had discussions over the last number of months in the House of Assembly around some shortages, maybe not as much around pharmacists, but we know – and I know a number of people in the industry – there are some shortages for pharmacists, but particularly as we change some legislation and we change our act that included that the pharmacy technicians would have to be relicensed and re-

registered in a different manner and at a different professional level.

That was fine; we needed to do that to ensure we had a certification level that would be acceptable across the board and we did that. There are some challenges – and we're still working through those – from some of the pharmacy assistants or the operational technicians who are in facilities that had a period of time to be grandfathered in through retraining, online training, recertification and going through the exam process. That's what we worked around. The board is helping facilitate some of that.

I would be remiss if I didn't still echo the concern I had then, and I still have. As of today, getting some emails from some of those pharmacy assistants or pharmacy technicians who worked in our health facilities in most cases, for decades in some cases, who have had to go back and do their retraining and then rewrite an exam and in some cases, because they're single parents or they're parents who are dealing with situations in their family, health reasons and all this type of thing, weren't successful on the first write. To do a rewrite, they must leave our province.

That's impossible right now with the situation we have. Why would you want to leave? Not counting the restrictions. And not being able to find a workable process with the board to be able to offer that rewrite. That's still a concern for me, and I had to get it out when we're talking about the pharmacy needs here and the board.

We got to a point – and I applaud it – that we were offering incentives for pharmacy technicians to either go back to school or to go in particular areas, particularly some of the more remote or rural areas, to practice and work in the dispensing process there. That's fine, we need to be able to have incentives so that all parts of our province have access to professionals as part of that, but we do have a small segment now, because we've managed to work around it – some have had to change their whole careers because they couldn't get this done – to be able to make it as engaging as possible for these

people who want to stay in a profession that they've been at for years, to be able to do things here in Newfoundland and Labrador. But that'll be another debate for another time.

I do respect the fact that we need to ensure we have these professionals available. Whatever it takes – particularly in a time of crisis like we have right now – to ensure that the availability is there at a moment's notice through our registration. I know we did it in other sectors of our health care. We brought back some retired health care professionals to ensure we were stable across the board, had the curve gotten much higher and the demand had been worsened in our health care facilities here. We've done it in the education system. In some remote isolated areas where we couldn't get teachers, we would bring back retired teachers and ensure that we're still up to par and certified and qualified to be able to do it. We do it in other areas.

Changing the act here brings that up to where it should be. I'll have a few questions when we get to it, but we support this. We encourage the board to move as quick as possible to be able to ensure that they have the people certified in case there is a need – we hope there's never a need for it – but that things are put in place.

We do encourage them that they do not put too many hindrances, I say that around additional fees or encompassing processes that would hinder people from wanting to get back into practicing a particular field they had, or that would have to speed up something that they now would've been already ready for when we got through our pandemic.

We will be supporting this. I'll have a couple of quick questions when we get to Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to stand for a few minutes. First of all, to the minister and to all ministers here, pass on to the staff the briefings that we had, they were very forthright, they were very patient. They

answered a lot of the questions and even one that I had this morning, they got back to me later that day on some issues.

So I just pass it back to the staff and say thank you very much for the briefing, because I know that it's a time constraint for all of us. They had to change their schedules. I know Keith White had to change his schedule for me a couple of times because I was driving yesterday. So I just want to pass on to everybody who was arranging it and to all the staff, thank you very much for this.

I'll just raise a few issues that I raised at the briefing itself, just for the general public. If a pharmacist comes back and the board itself feels that this pharmacist, he or she, has been out so long, they may be able to do other duties if they can't do the actual work of a pharmacist. If someone was right now still not up to date, they may be able to do some other work that they can help in the pharmacy. That's the big thing. They're not just plucking people out who have been out for 20 or 25 years or something just to move in. That's the safeguard that was put in place.

The other thing that I brought up is students. In the piece of legislation it says – in the report briefing that we had – that students could be taken from a pharmacy and start doing the work, if necessary, as deemed by the board. When I asked about that I just want to explain that you have to complete your degree and waiting to do the national exam.

A person who's going to university and doing the pharmacy program, if they never completed their program, they can't be taken. That was a point that was made. In the Explanatory Note that was given to us it was that you'd be waiting for the exams, so we were saying, gee – I was saying the exam from university? No, it's waiting to do your national exam. You already completed your program. I just wanted to make that very clear.

Also, I asked the question about once this pandemic is over if people are called back on an emergency basis. If people are called back on an

emergency basis and they want to stay after, they have to go through the guidelines that you normally would have to go through to become a full-fledged pharmacist. Once they call you back and they put you in this situation and you say I'd like to stay now as a pharmacist, they have to go back and make sure the guidelines that they have to do.

I just wanted to put that out for the general public that this is only because of the pandemic. If this passes, the policies and the programs that you would have to follow through to become a full-fledged pharmacist, if you're out, will be adhered to by the Pharmacists' Association.

Again, I have spoken to several pharmacists around Corner Brook. I thank them for the work that they're doing. As we know, a lot of times the pharmacists are the ones that see the people who are sick, who need the medication and sometimes are coming from the doctor's office, going into the pharmacy. They are putting their safety – and I just want to recognize the work that they do to keep people healthy, make sure everybody has their medication and do it in such a way that they are still inspiring, that they're still trying to encourage people. I've seen them encourage people that this is going to pass, we'll get back to it. I know there was an issue raised, Minister, about the month's supply. I understand that. I know it was raised today about trying to help out in some way with the fees. That's a legitimate concern. That was a legitimate issue that was brought forward by a lot of people about the month's supply instead of the three-month supply.

I just wanted to say, again, thank you to the pharmacists. There are plenty of safeguards in this to ensure that people will be well qualified for dispensing our drugs. I'm very confident that we will be safe. Even if the minister has the authority through the Pharmacy Board to call people back to help, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be safe with the dispensing of their drugs with this (inaudible).

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We in the NDP will be supporting this act, this amendment. Again, like a lot of the items we've been considering here, it's proactive. It's not waiting for the need to arise but addressing a potential need that we've seen as a result of COVID-19 and it's precautionary.

It allows for the issuing of emergency registration to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians where there is immediate need. Certainly, we in the Third Party favour these amendments. It gets health professionals where they're needed in a crisis such as a pandemic or any federally declared disaster. We saw the stress during Snowmageddon at the end of January there; the impact when drug stores were closed, the impact it had on certain people receiving methadone, for example.

We know that crisis situations can put stress on a system. At least here, where this may not have addressed that situation, it does allow for the addressing of a pandemic like COVID-19. The one thing we've learned from the world is that the one thing to defeat this disease is to take it on as a quick and immediate response, as quickly as we can.

In many ways it's going to address the urgent need for pharmacists if they're required. If pharmacists become sick and they're unable to fulfill their duty, all you have to do is walk into any pharmacy right now, Mr. Speaker, and you'll certainly see the precautions that are in place right there to protect those people and those personnel, a very valuable resource.

In many ways what it is, it's almost like it's drawing on its reserves. If you look at the retired pharmacists who are yet to complete their national registration or pharmacists from other organizations, pharmacy technicians, they're in reserve and if we need them, we can call upon them.

With that in mind, certainly that's legislation that we can support. It's certainly proactive and again constructive, and certainly deals with the need as we have it right here.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: If the minister speaks now, he will close the debate.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm gratified to see the comments from the other side of the House. I think this is a sensible precaution, and I would take my seat and wait comments from Committee.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that the Bill 37 be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012. (Bill 37)

MR. SPEAKER: The bill has now been read a second time.

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012” read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 37)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I moved, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the House resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 37.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, the Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Bennett): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 37, An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012.” (Bill 37)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just a couple quick questions for the minister, and I talked a little bit about it, is there a noted shortage in pharmacists or pharmacy technicians right now on the books?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: The short answer is no. The slightly longer answer is that we have a little bit of a dip this year, the 2019 grad class. We moved from a B.Pharm. to a Pharm.D. through the school of pharmacy. What that means is the Pharm.D. is a four-year program; the B.Pharm was a three, so there was one year where the first year of the doctorate overlapped and ran on beyond, so we didn’t have any new graduates coming on stream. That is manageable. Essentially, we’re okay at the moment, but we kind of factored that into the system.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just a couple of quick questions around the process here. The board will have the right to set any fees and services, timelines, the application process. Will it be in line with their standard processes for pharmacists or pharmacy technician, or is there is a different leeway now, do you know, for the new individuals that may be recruited?

CHAIR: The Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: The board have the authority under their own regulations and act to do all those kinds of professional things that we would expect. In other emergency categories, the process is designed to be quite rapid.

For example, if you had somebody who had literally finished their entire educational

requirements, just have been deferred as far as their exam was concerned but had got a passing grade from their preceptors and assessors, they would be potentially in a fairly rapid stream.

Similarly, someone who just retired last year and may have just lapsed from the point of view of either subscription or a bit of 50 hours or whatever CPD, they would be quite quick. But it would be up to the board to assess and it would be up to the board to design their own process.

The fact is it just gives them the option to do that on the request from the minister or if they, as a body in touch, obviously, with their own discipline, decide that there is a potential or a significant risk of a potential to want to trigger it. So there are two routes where it can be triggered. The process is theirs.

CHAIR: The Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Just one last quick one, and maybe I just missed reading it, but I couldn't find it. The proposed changes, when do they take effect? Are they immediate or is there a time frame?

CHAIR: The Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: On Royal Assent. The board would then have the leeway to set this process up.

CHAIR: Seeing no other questions.

Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 5 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 5 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 5 carried.

CLERK: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows.

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 37 without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 37.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 37 without amendment.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Order, please!

The hon. Member for Lewisporte-Twillingate, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 37 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole has reported that the Committee has considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 37 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MS. CROCKER: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read for a third time?

MR. CROCKER: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I call third reading of Bill 37.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 37, An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012, be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012. (Bill 37)

MR. SPEAKER: The bill has now been read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Pharmacy Act, 2012,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 37)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call second reading of Bill 38.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 38, An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act, be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 38, An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act.” (Bill 38)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It doesn't seem like that long ago that I actually got up to bring this bill in as what was then a landmark piece of public health and health promotion legislation. Little did we envisage at the time that some areas of that act would be exercised in a way that public health legislation had not been exercised for, well, literally a hundred years, between the Spanish flu and the Public Health Protection and Promotion Act of 2018.

At the time, we thought we had covered pretty well every eventuality that we would likely find ourselves in, but as none of us who were involved in the drafting of it had any practical experience of a true global pandemic of that magnitude, we were found to be wrong and we find ourselves here today.

In keeping with the tradition of second reading, the rationale behind this is that as we have

learned from other jurisdictions, once we get to flattening the curve, as people here understand it – and we seem to be in that situation where our numbers are happily fairly low – we find ourselves in a situation then of looking at what we need to do to be able to relax some of our more restrictive measures that we put on normal, as it were, daily activity. Paradoxically, in doing that, we find ourselves in a situation where we actually have to tighten up some of the measures that we already have.

Principally, the learnings from other jurisdictions are that as a background, a sine qua non, of actually doing the normalizing, the adaptation phase, border controls have become a really key lever, one of really only three we have until such time as there is workable, widely available vaccine and/or a specific treatment for this illness.

We have seen across the globe changes in the way countries have managed their borders and we have seen across Canada the way various jurisdictions within Canada have treated their own borders. We have often felt our geography has isolated us and people don't come here by accident has been a mantra for our tourism industry and, hence, the wonderful marketing we've had up to now. But the facts of the case are, as you look around jurisdictions across Canada, border controls have come in and that's an interesting development all of itself, but the Territories have some very specific, almost rigid entry requirements. New Brunswick and PEI have instituted fairly significant restrictions. Those are the sorts of things that you would never have contemplated seeing in Canada, given its very Libertarian background.

That's the framework in which we find ourselves. The situation that we find ourselves in, again for a timeline recap, is that on March 11, WHO, the World Health Organization, declared a pandemic and, on March 18, under the authority in the act, as it existed, I declared a public health emergency in Newfoundland and Labrador. That, by law, has to be renewed every 14 days or it simply lapses.

Under that state of emergency, authority exists and resides with the chief medical officer of health for the province to impose a series of Special Measures Orders she may feel would benefit, remedy, mitigate, prevent spread of COVID-19.

Complying with these measures has actually not been easy. A lot of the public health staff and my department's time has been seized with trying to resolve and arbitrate some of these issues. Having said that, the results that we see now in terms of numbers of cases are an obvious testament to the will of the people to accept good advice and the efficacy of the measures that we put in place.

Having seen that then, as recently as April 30, the chief medical officer of health, Dr. Fitzgerald, announced an alert-level plan that would see a phased return to something near normal. For the benefit of the House, I would caution that the Alert Level 1 that is in the plan is not actually life as we know it, to coin a phrase from *Star Trek*, but it's a level of adaptation that we think is reasonable and possible to achieve, providing we do certain things.

As I said, paradoxically, we find ourselves in a situation now where as we look to broaden activity and interaction, we have to tighten up some of our measures. On May 4, the orders that were issued last week stipulate now a restriction on travel into the province. This is the border control piece to which I alluded.

Actually, it says that only three categories of persons will have access to travel in the province. Those are those people who are ordinarily residents in Newfoundland and Labrador, essential workers, and individuals who would be granted exemption for a fairly wide variety of reasons under exemption from the CMOH. So family reunification, for reasons of compassion, for people who wish to relocate here. Those are things we would encourage, despite the fact it's a pandemic; and, obviously, anybody coming into the province would have to have a satisfactory isolation plan.

However, throughout the Public Health State of Emergency, whilst education and encouragement have been our main philosophy, our main approach, there is an enforcement piece to this. The RCMP and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary have been engaged in enforcing the special measures orders. They have the necessary legal authority, and the special summary offence ticket provision deals with their ability to impose summary tickets.

The problem, however, with the travel prohibition is that the policing agencies, lawyers with Justice and Public Safety, have advised us that they require specific authority to locate, detain and convey a person in the province in contravention of the travel order. Each of those words has a specific legal connotation, which is not necessarily the way they may be ordinarily understood.

This bill, Bill 38, the amendment seeks to clarify the authority under the special measures orders that would exist. It's been in force for less than a year, and obviously we've had some new experiences in figuring out how it would work. It served us well. The chief medical officer of health, however, requires some support from law enforcement to help deal with those rare occasions where education and encouragement would not actually be sufficient.

The details of the wording in the act that we are proposing are actually taken from other areas of the act which deal with communicable diseases orders. These wording and these regulations have been in place, in one form or another, in our public health legislation for well over four decades. We have simply moved them to deal with a situation that none of us had anticipated, which is around requiring people to enter the province to do so for very clear, specific, publicly health-validated reasons.

We know from other jurisdictions that if we continue with the good work we have done here in keeping our distancing and doing the good cough and sneeze hygiene and these kind of things, the only realistic source of a significant cluster of new cases then becomes importation from outside. Because of that, we, on the advice

of the medical officer of health, come to this House to seek an amendment to the act to allow law enforcement peace officers to have the powers that they feel they need to be able to do the job we've asked them to do, which is to provide a degree of enforcement, when needed, at points of entry into the province.

The amendments are clearly laid out there. The role of second reading is to discuss the needs and rationale for it. The role, as I understand it, of Committee is to deal with specific questions around the wording and the clauses.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat. I'll be interested to listen to comments from other sides of the House and then, hopefully, we can move through the afternoon with this important piece of legislation.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for those assorted comments.

Bill 38, the amendment, is of a recent vintage; in fact, we were presented with it around 5 o'clock yesterday. On first impression it seemed very far reaching, because, in effect, it's granting what, on the face of it, seems a dramatic extension of police powers to peace officers to do such things as locate an individual, detain an individual and convey an individual who is in contravention of a measure to a specified location, including a point of entry, which kind of sounds like deportation.

I'm sure the minister is right and being candid when he said that when the underlying legislation, the Public Health Protection and Promotion Act, was passed by this House not so long ago, nobody was really expecting the Spanish flu to hit us or anything the same or similar, which, in fact, is what has happened with the virus we know as the SARS-COVID virus.

So on first blush this seemed like a rather dramatic intrusion into the right of residents to go about their business in a peaceable way. It is, of course, directed at the enforcement of special orders but, in reality, it's mainly directed at the enforcement of the travel ban order which is Special Measures Order, amendment 11, passed on April 30 or promulgated on April 30.

In other words, it's aimed at the situation of now that we've tightened up who can come into the province, at least by way of orders – it's aimed at what we do when someone comes into the province who doesn't have a right to be here in accordance with the terms of the various orders or the travel ban order. Because nobody was really expecting the Spanish flu – if I can put it that way – when this act was originally promulgated only a couple of years ago, this question hadn't been completely thought through. Now we find ourselves faced with this necessity.

In giving this some thought yesterday evening, and in consultation with colleagues, it occurred to me that these police powers are not so much the issue as the issue in terms of checks and balances. There is, after all, a clause in the underlying legislation itself, section 13, which requires proportionality of the Special Measures Orders, or anything done pursuant to a state of emergency and the orders thereunder pursuant to the act.

Section 13 says this: "Where an individual's rights or freedoms are restricted as a result of the exercise of a power or the performance of a duty under this Act ... the restriction shall be no greater than is reasonably required in the circumstances to respond to" a public health emergency – I'm leaving a few words out. It requires proportionality and restrictions that are no greater than reasonably required in the circumstances to respond to the public health emergency.

Minimal intrusion on individual rights and freedoms is required by the terms of the legislation itself. Then, added to that is the fact that we live in a constitutional democracy with something called the Charter of Rights and

Freedoms which governs all other laws. Anything Parliament does, anything this Legislature chooses to do, is subject to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, by section 6, contains mobility rights, including rights to move between provinces. So there are legal and constitutional considerations which rise when considering something like a travel ban order.

It might have been better had the government chosen to consult with Committee Members, including myself, as to the terms of the order I'm referring to passed on the 30th of April, number 11, but they elected otherwise. Members of the legal community have communicated with me to express their grave concern that that particular order does go too far and trenches on the mobility rights conferred on every citizen of Canada and landed immigrant by reason of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

I don't for a second pretend that the minister and his colleagues and his officials have disregarded considering this difficult question. I'm sure they have, but as he would admit – and this is what we expect of him – his responsibility as minister is to enforce and give effect to the state of emergency that he promulgated under the *Public Health Protection and Promotion Act* and to ensure that the public health is protected. That's his focus, and he's right to be robust and thorough in fulfilling those duties, but it, therefore, falls to others to give appropriate consideration in the question of balancing the infringement of individual rights and freedoms versus the public health objective of the special measures.

In that context, we had vigorous discussion and candid discussion yesterday and this morning which resulted in a compromise over some amendments that I expect will be made – I've been given to understand – in Special Measures Order amendment 11 to expand the category of individuals who will be considered under the discretionary provision contained in that order. People like close family members; issues like family reunification, moving for employment and retirement and the like. So my perception at

the moment is that these police powers that are contained in the amendment are necessary to give force and effect to the travel-ban order. However, the travel-ban order could usefully receive some review and expansion, and I believe the government has agreed that will happen.

As a further safeguard, I do believe the government has agreed to receive any comments the Canadian Bar Association, Newfoundland branch, may wish to make on the conformity of both the amendment in front of us and the Special Measures Order, which deals with travel, and that the government will give due consideration to any comments the Canadian Bar Association wishes to make on conformity of the order or the amendments with section 13 of the act or with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and act accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, with the understanding that those amendments to the special order will occur, and with the understanding that the government is willing to be open-minded and consider relevant comments in writing from the Canadian Bar Association, our caucus is content that the amendment should go.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to stand and speak a few minutes on this. Of course, there are some concerns expressed to me already about it, and, of course, the Opposition House Leader, in his speech there, gave a lot of great comments and his knowledge into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. His view as a lawyer is well respected and I'm sure his comments will be looked at by the minister. I just thank the Leader of the Opposition for that because they were very insightful comments and a layperson like me who would think the same thing but wouldn't have the experience that the Leader of the Opposition would have, so I thank him for that.

Mr. Speaker, some of the concerns that were expressed to me when I spoke to a few people today, and, of course, the minister can clarify this, because this order was put back, I think, last Thursday, so the question I always have is the process. Was this vetted through Cabinet in the normal process through the Committees in government? Because we always ask if it was vetted through the Committee, so a lot of the issues that would come forth and a lot of flaws, or somehow to strengthen the bill would come forward.

The question was: When this was made last Thursday, for example, between Thursday and now, did it go through the proper SPC to bring it to Cabinet and vet it out to the appropriate departments? The process is the big part because if we don't follow the process, then there's a chance we're not going to have the best legislation that we can bring forward.

If the minister can explain and confirm that when this decision was made and discussed, was the process followed through the normal Committees and Cabinet? It's a big question for me. If not, then we feel that some of the issues the Opposition Leader has brought forth may come to a bit of a concern for people.

That's the big issue, because I understand out in the media that Cabinet is not meeting as much as they should. There are not a lot of issues that are being brought up that's flowing through to Cabinet. If the media is correct on it, the question I would ask is: Did it go through full and proper procedure, have a full Cabinet meeting on this and then brought forward to the House? It's very important.

Another concern that was expressed to me when I called around – and the minister can explain this when he stands to speak – is a lot of officers from the enforcement side of it, from Fisheries and Lands, they now can stop a vehicle. Before, they were helping out, say, in Port aux Basques helping to fill out the declarations. Now they have the authority to stop a vehicle.

My understanding from the briefing – and it was a very intensive briefing – again, they said they

could stop them. If they feel it's not being done, they have to call the RCMP or the RNC to ensure that if they need to take someone in to custody or need to be free, to ensure that the person is self-isolating. Is that correct? I'm sure it is but I just want to confirm that the officers who are wildlife officers out now doing this work, once this is put through, what kind of powers will they have? It's a big concern of a few people that was brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, also, how long will these measures be in place? This was a concern that was also brought forth. This is the kind of concerns that once you step this up to give the powers to the officers or the enforcement officers, it's becoming concerning to people. I know they're all professionals and I thank them all for their duties, but there are some people that would have a few concerns with some of these changes that are being brought forth.

I may be going off topic a small bit, and I know I expressed this, and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, we had extensive discussions on this ourselves and he's hearing it from his own constituents. The minister stated that importation of the virus from outside, that's our concern. And I agree. We look at the Core Science building; we look at the long-term facility, when we look in Gander and Grand Falls.

Mr. Speaker, I have the copy of the regulations here in front of me that was sent out and here's a concern that's been expressed to me, expressed to the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, and I'll just read it, Mr. Speaker, for the record.

It's section 1 and 3: "Asymptomatic workers in the trade, transportation, mining, agriculture, hydro electric and oil and gas sectors, including truck drivers and crew on any plane, helicopter, train, or marine vessel, including fish harvesting vessels, arriving in Newfoundland and Labrador from another province or territory in Canada are exempted from the requirement to self-isolate for 14 days only while these workers are travelling to and from their home and place of work in the province. When not working, these

workers must otherwise self-isolate while in the province.”

Section 3: “Asymptomatic workers essential to the critical maintenance of the province’s infrastructure in the trade, transportation, health care, agriculture”

So the question I have to ask – and I’m going on what the minister’s comments were that we’re scared of importation. Who in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is saying that the workers are essential to the critical maintenance of the province’s infrastructure when you’re laying the floor at the Core Science building in St. John’s?

MR. CROCKER: (Inaudible.)

MR. JOYCE: Who? And with the long-term care facilities out in Gander and Grand Falls. Who?

When you bring in these measures, to bring in these measures that we can stop and we can actually now tell someone get back, we’re bringing you back or sending you back or force you into a situation, yet we’re allowing a loophole in here right now that we’re saying we’re going to speak to the civil, we’re going to speak to the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association, yet we’re allowing this to happen when the minister is saying that importation is the big part of it.

This is a concern that’s been brought up to me. I hope it’s going to be resolved. I know the Minister of Transportation and Works is well aware of it and I know he’s working at it. That is the concern. Now, all of a sudden, we’re going to allow where you can’t come in, we can enforce you but if somebody, whoever it may be – this is the question I asked; I hope I’m going to get the answer. I hope I’ll get it tomorrow. Who declared these workers laying the floor essential to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador? That’s the question. It may be a loophole in it.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. JOYCE: You’re going to be up next? Oh, perfect. That’s good. So that’s what we need.

Then the other incidents that we’re relating to is the powers of the enforcement officers. For example, wildlife officers, they’re covered under this, with their training and they are trained – but what are going to be their powers also that’s going to be involved with this?

There are some concerns with it. I can see why we need this done. I know the incident over on the West Coast was just over a street from me. I know the unit where the person tried to get them to self-isolate. It is a concern for us.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing – it always comes back to a lot of people coming in from outside the province. For example, now with the restrictions – and I know the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands also had a major concern with the restrictions, like in the trailer park. A lot of people are responsible. There are a lot of people responsible in this province. It has shown, through the last three or four months, a lot of people are responsible. A lot of people take this very seriously. A lot of people are worried about their health and health of their families and others.

Mr. Speaker, this is a concern, nope, not allowed, even though some people, for example – and I’ll just use St. John’s, for example, rents a place, \$2,000 \$3,000 a year, a 100-foot lot, there’s no one within a hundred feet of him, but because it’s a trailer park area – that’s the kind of things people are saying can we look at and be a part of.

I noticed, Mr. Speaker, with the restriction put in coming to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, then I had a few from people I know, personally, saying we go there, there is no one within 50 feet of us. This is where we can go for May 24 until October. We understand, it’s our health.

They’re seniors. A good friend of mine, I helped him get back from Florida and I know him personally. I knew him for 40 years, 50 years. He’s saying they’re senior citizen, him and his

wife. He said we go to our trailers, there's no one around us. It's in a trailer area, but there's no one within 50 feet of us. So can we look at something like that because we are responsible?

I understand that the concerns may be that sometimes when people are having a few drinks they may not, but there are a lot of responsible people out there. They ask me, and they asked the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, to bring up those concerns to government to look at those restrictions and what phases they're going to be in.

I'm going to go way off topic, Mr. Speaker, if you'll allow me just for a minute. It was brought to my attention about – and I saw the responses that the grooming of animals is way down on the list. If you bear with me for a minute, Mr. Speaker, on this, because when we're putting in these measures – and I understand the pros and cons for it – I will be supporting the bill. I will be supporting the bill, but here are the concerns. I have to bring up the grooming of animals, and I understand that it's way down on the list.

Mr. Speaker, again, I'll bring it to the minister's attention. I know the Minister of Health is listening attentively over there to the speech, and I thank the minister for that. The thing with the animal grooming. I'm an owner of three dogs and four cats – a lot more than people around. It's easy to put in regulations where you can put your dog on the bridge, the groomer will come out, take the dog, bring him downstairs, put him back, with absolutely no contact whatsoever.

I know it's low on the list, I understand it's low on the list. But I have to raise that concern because I know with animals that I have, once their nails get too long, they get sore feet, bad feet. So is there any way that we can look at something like this, because the animals can't speak for themselves. They can't. If we could drop food off to a house, prepared by someone in a kitchen, drop it off to a house with no touching, I'm sure there's a way to take an animal, put them on a leash, lay them on the bridge, take them in, get them done with no contact whatsoever with the payments these days. That's something I have to bring forward.

The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands has brought that concern also. It may be low on the priority list and I understand people's safety is more important, but, Mr. Speaker, I have to raise it because the animals can't speak for themselves and it's something that we can do fairly easily, especially if we just allow one animal at a time to be groomed.

Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat. The Minister of Transportation and Works is going to stand next and hopefully give us an update on it all.

This may be my last opportunity to speak today on any bill. I think it's the last bill for the day, from my understanding.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is.

MR. JOYCE: It is the last bill for the day.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank all the front-line workers again. I just want to thank all the people who work in grocery stores, all the people who deliver oil, the truck drivers across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, all the people who are showing kindness to some people who are unable to get out and enjoy life. I just want to thank all them.

To the Minister of Health and Dr. Fitzgerald, it's a tough job, what you're doing. It's tough. Make no bones about it, it's tough. This is a territory that none of us have ever experienced. There are times when you bring up concerns for people but you have to take in the big context of the whole scheme of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now I have to say – and I will say it – that I will be bringing issues forward on behalf of the people that I represent in Humber - Bay of Islands, especially people who are trying to get medical treatment and other things. But I can tell you one thing and I'll say it here and I'll say it publicly: John Haggie and Dr. Fitzgerald, I'm glad you guys are at the helm. I have to say that you have come through with confidence and voice. I know the people that I represent understand the issues that you're bringing forth. They look for your advice. They appreciate your guidance.

There are many times that we may say, oh, this should happen, take one little small piece of the bigger puzzle of Newfoundland and Labrador or this should happen because it may affect me. It's sad for the people who passed away; it's sad for the people who are still trying to recover from COVID, but overall with Dr. John Haggie and Dr. Fitzgerald, I'm proud to say that –

MR. SPEAKER: I would caution the Member not to use names.

MR. JOYCE: I'm sorry; the Minister of Health and Dr. Fitzgerald. I'm glad they're at the helm of Newfoundland and Labrador. I'm proud that they're Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I'm proud to say they're leading us through this very turbulent time in our history. We feel confident that we will come through on the other end, then we'll start recovering in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and unlike the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands, I'm really only going to take a minute.

Mr. Speaker, to some of the Member's comments around the essential projects in the province, very early on in this pandemic and as we went forward, we've often made changes. One of the things, when you think about that, we talked about the projects themselves being essential.

If there are some issues around here now – and I certainly believe there are issues around some of the actual essentialness of some of these workers that we're seeing. We're going to work with Health and Community Services to make sure that if there are any loopholes here that we're going to plug them, as we've done all along through this process.

Really, Mr. Speaker, this is about worker safety. Whether it's somebody on a TW job or a Memorial University job, a fish harvester or a

fish processor or somebody working in a plant, this is about safety. We'll always take the necessary steps to ensure safety.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We'll be supporting – my colleagues and I – this amendment. If someone had told me a year ago that I was going to be a Member of the House of Assembly during a pandemic, sitting on a joint public health safety committee and coming into some modified version of the House, I couldn't even imagine it.

I have the privilege of sitting on the joint public health safety committee with Members of the government, with Members of the Opposition and our own colleagues. Daily we get updated and we have the opportunity to have input on decisions that are being made. For that to happen, in many cases, it means that you have to put aside your partisan swords and weapons and try to work to find some sort of collaboration.

It's been very much a balancing act because a lot of it we're trying to make decisions, as I'm sure the chief medical officer, the Minister of Health and the Premier in this situation, government Members – and even on our own side, you're trying to make decisions regarding a situation, an event that we've had no experience with before and it's caused an awful lot of pain for people.

The legislation in question here is very limited and it tries to strike that balance, I guess, it's a very limited exercise under very limited conditions. It's not something that stays in place and has to be renewed every two weeks. The travel restrictions, or the enforcement of those travel restrictions, is basically one more tool that the chief medical officer will need to make sure that we are safe.

Now, in this joint public health safety committee, both the Leader of the Opposition

and I have pressed continuously for tighter controls around entry into this province, at the airports and points of entry with the signing of declaration cards. We've been probably very clear about that, from not only the airport, but at the ferry terminal. We've heard our own complaints from people who've gotten on and seen the lax restrictions. We've asked for this. This has to be tightened up if we're going to make the COVID-19 restrictions work.

In some ways in this we've gotten what we've asked for, it's as simple as that. The question I always look at in anything is it reasonable. It's about as ephemeral, I guess, as any buds in spring; it doesn't last. It lasts as long as it's renewed and as long as the pandemic, state of public health emergency, is in effect. No one's property is seized. No one is going to be turfed from their hotel room at night. There's no fine, but it's very clear that the person or the people who are travelling here, without getting an exemption or don't fall under one of the categories, are going to be sent back to follow the process.

We've made a lot of sacrifices throughout this. Let's talk about rights, infringement on rights. Funerals, people can't be present for the passing of their loved ones. It is my right to attend a funeral, peaceful gatherings, but not under COVID-19. Now, I'm sure we've all had calls on that of people anguished, people who've lost during COVID-19. All you have to do is think of Nova Scotia. Family gatherings – for me, it's the fact that I can't be around my grandchildren. Now we have the double bubble and I'll do anything to defend it. Weddings – all of them are rights. I took my mother to the hospital the other day. I couldn't even go into the hospital with her. That's my right, to go with her. I could not go.

So when we talk about mobility rights, here's the thing: COVID-19 I don't think cares about mobility rights. Probably counting on you exercising mobility rights. And I don't think it cares what the Canadian Bar Association has to say either. It's not a medical organization.

I know that when I got involved with this Committee, I made one comment that in the end, I would leave my own political comments out of it; that it would be very much about supporting Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, chief medical officer, and the Minister of Health in this to make the decisions that are required from a health point of view.

Is there a balance? I had to look at the greater good. And that meant, yes, that I don't get to go and visit my children or my grandchildren; that I may not be able to be there at the passing of someone I care about; that I have to say to a person who comes to me, no, you can't be at your loved one's funeral, because we know how deadly this disease is. It's not H1N1; it's novel. It took me a while to figure out what novel is. Novel means new. There is no immunity to it.

For the most part with the double bubble, there's been a bit of a payoff because we've managed to flatten the curve. I know friends of mine who cannot go into the long-term care facilities because their parent or in-law who suffers from dementia is in that facility. By the time they get there, they will have forgotten who they are.

I guess in many ways I have to ask the question: Do I want all of this undone? Where does the concern come from? I saw the news report the other day about the person who has a home here and wants to come down for the summer. Maybe there is an allowance, something we can do for that. Certainly, as I can see, there is ample room for application for exemptions, but in the end this decision must be based purely on public health. That's what I'm looking at here.

Is this a reasonable infringement on my rights? I'm not sure if I'm going to be able to travel across the province to do what I enjoy to do in the summer. I want to be able to go to Labrador and fish, but you know what, it might be said: sorry, that's not on this year. I might say: how dare you tell me that I can't travel to another part of the province.

Here I'm trying to weigh the balance. I would love that I – and here's where I think we're going. We might be at the stage that maybe by

the summer we're going to have some freedom of movement to be able to travel this province with some security. If I do go to Corner Brook, if I do go to the Northern Peninsula, that I know the risk of picking up COVID-19 from someone is minimal to non-existent.

I think what we've done here is we've done a remarkable amount of collaboration, co-operation and self-sacrifice on the part of everyone. Can there be improvements? Sure, there can. I believe in asking the chief medical officer questions, but in the end, it comes down to her decision. It has to be that. I do not want to get to the stage, like certain citizens in our southern neighbour, where their right, their desire or their want to get a haircut outweighs another person's right to breathe. It's as simple as that.

For me, if we were proposing this as the state of being for the rest of our lives, I would have serious problems with it. But I think here, under the restrictions that are in place, under the conditions that these powers can only be used in a public health emergency that has to be renewed, that basically there is collaboration between the Minister of Justice, of Health and the chief medical officer. I look at the number of fail safes that are in place. It's interesting. I never knew as a teacher, Mr. Speaker – realize what powers I had. It's a little known fact that a teacher can search a student without warrant, without cause. Actually, I can call the police in and they will restrain the student so that I can search his or her pockets if I suspected they have some – the level of expectation is not the same as for the police, but that can be done. How many teachers use it? Very few, but it's there.

I think at this point in time we give the tools to the chief medical officer that she needs. There is oversight from the House. There are checks and balances in place. Let's do what needs to – at the point of view. If what can be done, can be done from a medically sound COVID-19 prevention point of view, then let's do it. Anything else is politics.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services, if he speaks now he'll close the debate.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I've listened intently to the discussions from the other side. This was a loophole that we identified in discussions with the peace officers, the RCMP and the RNC, and really only came to light on Friday. It was a very rapid process this weekend, but we made the best of the process that we could, given the time.

I apologize to the Opposition for the seeming rapidity with which we presented them with this. I thank them for their flexibility in getting this far. I think the Leader of the Opposition is correct. The detail is really around the Special Measures Order.

To answer some of the questions in anticipation of Committee, this is a measure that would last only for the duration of a state of health emergency, as defined under the act. The nuances of how that would work, as were pointed out, would essentially depend on the wording of any travel ban. This really relates to points of entry and really is a challenge here simply because we're not connected to any other province, except in Labrador, by a road network.

New Brunswick have this. They can simply put a barrier in the road and turn people around. There's no issue about detention or moving people to a point of entry. PEI simply have kind of like a draw on the Confederation Bridge and they can simply instruct people to do a U-turn. So I think those are differences that have helped us in this but have revealed a problem, hopefully, for a very small group of individuals.

One of the things that the RNC and the RCMP have said is that the population of this province, when they have had dealings with law enforcement under the requirements of Special Measures Order, have actually been incredibly co-operative and they have gone away and done their part after having their error, as it were, corrected. They very much feel that, for

example, the population here behaves in a different way than you would see in other jurisdictions where tickets have been handed out like Smarties.

From my point of view, I'm grateful for the comments. The Member of the Third Party was very eloquent in some granular examples of how the law, as I understand it – and I'm not a lawyer – does allow for some variation based on proportionality when there is a balance between the greater good and individual freedoms. The proportionality, I think, really lies in the orders under the act, rather than necessarily solely with the amendment I proposed today, and that was highlighted by the Leader of the Opposition.

Thank you for the comments. With that, I'll take my seat and look forward to any questions or discussion in Committee.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 38 be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act. (Bill 38)

MR. SPEAKER: The bill has now been read a second time.

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole?

MR. CROCKER: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 38)

MR. SPEAKER: The Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 38.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, the Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Bennett): Order please!

We're now considering Bill 38, An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act." (Bill 38)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: I have some questions for the minister, Mr. Chair.

Could the minister suggest when he expects that amendments to Standing Measures Order, amendment 1, dated the 30th of April 2020 might be put forward?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much.

We had discussed that with the chief medical officer and my understanding is those revisions are actually in hand while I'm in here. Some redrafting of these orders is taking place on an almost daily basis on some occasions.

We had the discussions earlier before lunchtime and I think there was general consensus on where we want to go. I think, though, you should see the results of that fairly shortly.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you.

Would the minister be able to confirm that the government is open to considering any written comments the Canadian Bar Association Newfoundland and Labrador Branch may wish to make on either the Standing Measures Order, amendment 11, that deals with travel or, indeed, on the amendment to the act. The government, of course, always having the discretion to do what it wishes with the comments but simply to consider them.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: My understanding from discussions with the deputy minister in Justice and Public Safety is that they would be happy to

consider any submissions from the CBA – or CBA-NL, I'm not quite sure the correct acronym for that – but yes is the short answer.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you.

As the minister is well aware, we've been through a period of several weeks now with few or no cases, suggesting that we have good control over the inside the province. The minister is also aware that there are large areas of the province that have had no cases of infection identified.

So the question is, is the minister open to considering whether, as we get closer to the 11th of May – which is the date for coming into effect of Alert Level 4 – Alert Level 4 could not be shortened to a period such as 14 days, instead of 28, or indeed possibly even skipped altogether and go directly to Level 3?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: This is a dynamic, evolving situation and we've seen very rapidly at the beginning of this how things changed at the end. The situation is one where the pace is determined by the chief medical officer of health. Under the state of emergency under this act, she holds the pen on the basis of advice she receives from her team here locally, which consists of public health experts, staff in the department and clinicians. But also from Public Health Agency of Canada.

I would say that the plan as outlined on the day it was outlined was her best assessment of how best to go forward in a safe way. I would suggest also that what we've said in the past, that no good plan survives first contact with reality, is also equally valid and this reassessment process is not something that's done just occasionally on a whim. It's been done pretty well every day, so I think those are suggestions that certainly would be factored into it. Some of the comments from the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands and

others, and indeed, we get significant volume of calls and emails that would ask us to reconsider various elements of this. It's a dynamic process, so I wouldn't like anyone to think that we're not responsive in that way.

Literally from one day to the next, sometimes, the scientific advice about the disease – and the Member opposite, for example, referenced pet groomers. There has been evidence that certain pets can catch this disease and harbour it, and others, whilst not getting it, can actually pass the virus on, potentially. So those have been factors in the discussion, and until the science is clearer, we have adopted a precautionary approach.

So that's a rather long-winded way of saying yes to the Member opposite. It's certainly under review on a regular basis.

CHAIR: Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the minister for the answer.

What I hear him saying is that the level or staging levels or staging which have been put forward – the plan for exit I guess we could call it – is part of a dynamic and flexible reconsideration process, that being based on the most recent and best evidence.

That being the case, is the minister open to considering a zonal or a geographic zonal approach in which some areas of the province would come out or pass through the stages or levels faster than other areas?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: I think one of the challenges around the plan is that one of the things that's really been a craving from people is some elements of certainty or some significant degree of certainty. The challenge is that we don't have that – not because we don't have it; it just doesn't exist. There is no element of certainty around that. The framework of the plan was to

try and give business, not-for-profit sectors and areas of society some indication of what to expect in broad-brush terms.

The issues the Member opposite raises specifically about zones or geographies I have no view on, personally. I bow to and respect the view and the decision of the experts.

One of the challenges here is that whilst I receive a lot of the correspondence, we use this as a method to inform the public health officials of what the general discourse is in the public. The discussion, however, that they have and the generation of these Special Measures Orders under the act is the responsibility – in law and in statute under the act as it already exists, it belongs to the chief medical officer of health. There is not a role and there never was and it was a subject of debate here back in 2018. This was a public health emergency and the management of it would be guided by public health officials.

I'm quite happy to consider anything and take it back, but ultimately I am one player informing the medical officer's view of the world and she, quite rightly, bases her decisions on best public health practices. At the moment, she makes the decisions.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Question with regard to in the first clause, where it states, 28.1, "While a measure taken by the Chief Medical Officer of Health under subsection 28(1) is in effect, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety may, upon the request of and following consultation with the minister, authorize a peace officer to do one or more of the following"

So the question is the choice of "may" as opposed to "shall." Given that this is meant to address a serious public health emergency such as the one we're in at this point in time, why is "may" used and not "shall"? It would seem to suggest that the Minister of Justice actually has

veto power over the chief medical officer and/or Health.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much.

That word is there on the advice of Justice and Public Safety and the staff in Health, and really is a way to respect and acknowledge the issues around the proportionality and the challenge from the Charter. It gives the ability for the Minister of JPS to come to the chief medical officer or myself and say are you sure this is really what you want to do?

The understanding I have then is that once that due diligence is done – and as I say, that is a manoeuvre or step that was put in there to try and deal with potential challenges from a constitutional point of view. I think, once the decision has been made, that would then be a blanket application, rather than case-by-case. I think that may have been discussed at the briefing, or certainly one of them. But that's my understanding as to why the word was put in that way.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Then is it within the power of the Minister of Justice and Public Safety to withdraw that authorization?

CHAIR: The Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: My understanding from a process point of view is this is a time-limited exercise. So once there was a state of public health emergency and a Special Measures Order that relates to the circumstances around points of entry, then the discussion would take place within the framework of 28(1), and then once that authority was issued, my understanding is that it would then last until the circumstances of the order or the state of emergency changed.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Just to clarify, because to bring in this authorization requires consultation. What's not stated there is whether that, before it's lifted – and what I'm asking is if there's political pressure, is it within the authority of the Minister of Justice and Public Safety to withdraw that authorization, or would he or she have to consult with the chief medical officer?

There's a process in place, Mr. Chair, for implementing it. I'm just wondering what the process is for withdrawing it, or is it opened up to another minister, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety to do that if he deems it necessary?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much.

This is a tool for enabling a situation that we hope will never actually come about, but the facts of the case are – is my understanding of the process – is that once this authorization had been issued it would be a blanket and would last until such time as the order came to an end or was amended in some way that made that inappropriate, or the state of emergency was lifted.

CHAIR: Seeing no other questions.

Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 and 3.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 and 3 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 and 3 carried.

CLERK: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session, convened as follows.

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 38 without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 38.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 38 without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): The hon. Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 38 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee considered the matter to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 38 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MR. CROCKER: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I call third reading of Bill 38.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that Bill 38, An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act, be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill now be read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Public Health Protection And Promotion Act. (Bill 38)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and that its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Public Protection And Promotion Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 38)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I want to recognize a great job that the Deputy House Leader did today in his leadership, this afternoon. I certainly would also like to

recognize the Premier, the Minister of Health and Community Services and the chief medical officer for their outstanding leadership and hard work. They have been readily available over the last six weeks or seven weeks of this pandemic and I know it has been appreciated by the people of the province. Their efforts for keeping us safe are very much appreciated.

MR. CROSBIE: What about us?

MS. COADY: I'm coming to you.

The civil servants, of course, have gone above and beyond. I want to recognize Cabinet Secretariat for helping us get through the House this afternoon as well.

Most importantly, I also want to thank Members, the Members that are here today. I'm going to read into the record, Mr. Speaker: the Member for Windsor Lake, the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island, the Member for Conception Bay South, St. John's Centre, Humber - Bay of Islands, Humber - Gros Morne, Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde, Waterford Valley, Baie Verte - Green Bay, Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, Gander and, of course, you, Mr. Speaker, St. George's - Humber, and our Deputy Speaker, Lewisporte - Twillingate, for being here today, for representing all Members of this House of Assembly. I know all Members wish they were here today. Of course, they're working very diligently and hard in their own districts. We appreciate, on behalf of the people, the service, the help and their availability over these many weeks and know that we wish that they were here with us today. Hopefully, with virtual parliament we can see each other again soon.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank – I know on behalf of all of us here and all Members of the House of Assembly – the essential workers for everything that they have done and their commitment, their kindness over the last number of weeks.

Before I conclude, I want to thank the Table Officers for their efforts of getting us here, of adapting and ensuring we had what we needed to be able to do the people's business. They're

very much appreciated. I know that everyone in this House wants to recognize them and, of course, our Sergeant-at-Arms. Thank you very much to the Sergeant-at-Arms who keeps us very secure.

I want to thank the co-operation of the House Leaders and the independent, Mr. Speaker. The last number of weeks I think I've spoken more to the House Leaders than I did to my husband. I've been isolated with my husband for the last number of months, so it's something to be said that I've spoken more with House Leaders than I have with him. We've co-operated, we've worked hard together, we've worked our way through the legislation and I certainly appreciate their efforts.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, the Member of the House of Assembly for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, that this House do now adjourn to the call of the Chair.

Be safe and be well.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that this House does now adjourn to the call of the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

The House is now adjourned to the call of the Chair.

On motion, the House adjourned to the call of the Chair.